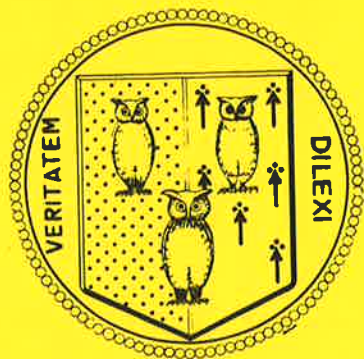


AUG 14 '64

BRYN MAWR



COLLEGE LIBRARY

LIBRARY  
BERKELEY DIVINITY SCHOOL  
NEW HAVEN 11, CONN.

HISTORY OF DOGMA  
IN FOUR VOLUMES

BY

PETER J. DOESWYCK, D.D.

Knights of Christ, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1651  
Long Beach, California

**HISTORY OF DOGMA**

volume three

# THE ROMAN WAY OF SALVATION

Its Origin and Development

OR

## HISTORY OF DOGMA

BY

PETER J. DOESWYCK, D. D.

Author of "Ecumenicalism and Romanism"

and

"The Ever Changing Church"

Knights of Christ, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1651  
Long Beach, California



Printed in the United States

BX

1765.2

D63

Copyright 1963  
by  
Peter J. Doeswyck

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 63-8582

LIBRARY  
BERKELEY DIVINITY SCHOOL  
NEW HAVEN 11, CONN.

All rights reserved. No part of this book protected by the above copyright  
may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the publisher.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. BAPTISM .....	5
CHAPTER II. CONFIRMATION .....	18
CHAPTER III. HOLY ORDERS .....	22
CHAPTER IV. EXTREME UNCTION .....	31
CHAPTER V. PENANCE .....	39-96
Priestly power to remit sin .....	41
Sin and its remission .....	46
Remission text of John 20:23 .....	48
Its interpretation by the Fathers ..	50
Form of Absolution .....	58
Difference between 1st and 3rd system .....	66
One Penance .....	68
Repeated repentance .....	70
No penance for clergy .....	70
Priests forbidden to reconcile .....	71
First Penitential System .....	73
Second Penitential System .....	78
Penitential Canons .....	80
Pecuniary Penances .....	83
Contrition of the heart alone .....	89-96
CHAPTER VI. PARTICULAR JUDGMENT ....	97-111
Tertullian .....	103
Modern Requiem Mass .....	105
Two Judgments .....	108-111
CHAPTER VII. MIDDLE PLACE .....	112
CHAPTER VIII. PURGATORY .....	134
CHAPTER IX. INDULGENCES .....	154

488203

"The way of salvation" (Acts 16:17).

"Jesus said: I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

"Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

"The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith . . . not by works" (Eph. 2:8).

Cavete ab hominibus: tradent enim vos in conciliis (Matt. 10:17).

Cognoscetis veritatem, et veritas liberabit vos (John 8:32).

## CHAPTER ONE

### BAPTISM

#### *WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM, ADULT BAPTISM AND BAPTISM BY IMMERSION?*

The history of Baptism does not entirely please any Christian, be he Baptist or Lutheran. It seems most embarrassing to the Roman Church. Were I to give a slanted history of Baptism in order to please one particular denomination, I would be neither a historian, nor an honest Christian. God is not in need of our lies. The fundamental Christian believes that the Bible, not Tradition, is the only safe rule of faith. Protestants will have to show that they live by this rule. They should further remember that we know hardly anything of the doctrines and customs of the first 150 years of Christianity. Our "tradition" of Baptism begins with the year 200 A.D., when the Catechuminate had already been introduced and numerous local (pagan) customs had already been adopted.

Christian customs never suffer when an individual pagan is converted, but they have suffered tremendously when an entire nation was converted. Each pagan nation naturally



tries to preserve as much of its tradition as possible. Naturally the Church suffered in purity in the 2nd century when many gentiles were converted; in the 4th century when paganism was outlawed; in the 8th century when Germany was converted; and again in the 17th century when the American Indians embraced the white man's religion.

Not all non-biblical customs are bad. A typical, 20th-century American church has a gas burner in its basement, electric lights, etc., and celebrates the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, etc., all of which will be obsolete and forgotten one thousand years from now. So also in the matter of the third-century baptismal rites and its system of the Catechumenate one must distinguish between doctrine and local customs.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (*Mark 16:16*). "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (*Acts 22:16*). "Jesus answered and said unto him: Verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*John 3:5*).

The last instruction Christ gave to his disciples was: to preach repentance and to baptize (*Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47; John 20:23; Acts 1:8*), and the first sermon that was preached in the church was a sermon on repentance and baptism: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Acts 2:38*). The result of this first sermon: 3,000 people believed, repented and were immediately baptized (*Acts 2:41*).

This passage and others reveal that in apostolic times the way of salvation was considered a very simple one. No one was instructed in complicated theological doctrines and catechisms, no adult had his baptism postponed, but all repented sinners were baptized after one message on faith and repentance.

Those who were baptized were to keep their "Baptism holy and undefiled" (*Clement of Rome, II Ep. to Cor. 6; Migne, P.G. I, 338*). This was apparently Clement's interpretation of Hebrew 10:26. In order to keep the Church "holy" and a "fellowship of saints", various national churches began to avoid hasty baptisms and insisted on long periods of trial and instructions. Thus the Catechumenate came into existence. The rules of this Catechumenate were borrowed heavily from existing practices of this pagan era, and thus greatly resembled the pagan period of trial, initiation and oath. As long as the Catechumenate (pre-baptismal catechism) existed in the Church of Rome (200-850 A.D.), baptisms were almost completely limited to adults.

#### INFANT AND ADULT BAPTISM

We have no reliable information about Infant Baptism during the first two centuries, because we do not possess many authentic writings of this period. Tertullian (d. 230), Bishop of Africa and founder of Latin Christianity, is the first to write a book "On Baptism" (*Migne, P.L. I, 1305-1334*). As the African Church had introduced the Catechumenate (pre-baptismal catechism), it was naturally against Infant Baptism. Yet it is clear from the book of Tertullian that the custom of Infant Baptism existed in Latin Africa. He asked: "Why should the innocent period of life hurry for the remission of sins?" "The delay of Baptism is more profitable according to the condition, disposition or age of each person, especially so in the case of children" (*Migne, P.L. I, 1330*). Thus about the year 200, Tertullian was fighting Infant Baptism. He advocated adult baptism for reasons totally different from those of today. He not only advocated instructions before Baptism, but he favored postponement of Baptism altogether, because he believed that Baptism was the only Sacrament for the remission of sins and that there



was no Second Baptism or another Sacrament for post-baptismal sins. In danger of death, however, both adult and child were to be baptized. In baptisms for sick children, the "sponsors" had to pronounce their baptismal vows for them.

Origen (d. 254), scholar of Greek Africa (Egypt) and neighbor of Tertullian and Cyprian, was the first Father of the Church to write a complete commentary on the books of the Bible (*Migne, P.G. 12-14*). From his commentaries we learn that the Alexandrian Church (Egypt) taught the doctrine of Original Sin (*Comment. on Luke, Hom. 14*), baptized little children (*Comment. on Leviticus, Hom. 8*), and held that Infant Baptism was of apostolic origin: "The Church received from the Apostles the tradition to give Baptism also to little children" (*Origen, Comment. on Romans, Bk 5, chapt. 6; Migne, P.G. 14, 1034*).

St. Cyprian (d. 258), Primate of Latin Africa, neighbor of Origen and the greatest Latin Father of the third century, followed the rules of Bishop Tertullian. Nearly all of Cyprian's works deal with Baptism. He was regarded as the greatest authority on this subject in his days. Yet no one today agrees with him, least of all the Latin Church. Cyprian maintained the Catechumenate, not only for converts but also as an ecclesiastical penal institution for those who after Baptism had committed one of the three mortal (unpardonable) sins: murder, adultery and idolatry. All other post-baptismal sins were regarded as *venial* (pardonable) and were through an act of contrition, love or general confession not imputed by God.

Some of Cyprian's African bishops did not believe in a catechumenate and baptized all babies, sick or healthy, on the eighth day after birth, as was the custom for circumcision. Bishop Fidus at the Third Council of Carthage challenged St. Cyprian to express his opinion on Infant Baptism. Cyprian, who advocated unity in the church but also be-

lieved in democracy and in total independence for all pastors, replied: "We have judged that the mercy and grace of God is not to be denied to anyone born of man" (*Migne, P.L. 3, 1051*).

Cyprian himself baptized only adults and this by immersion. However, he baptized sick children and ailing adults by pouring water over their heads only. Some seem to have criticized him for this, and those thus baptized were called 'Clinics' or bed-christians. Because of the African (Latin) custom of Adult Baptism, the Council of Carthage (256) speaks of "Baptizing the faith of believers" (*canon 79; Mansi I, 964*). Cyprian himself explained that it is not the water that washes away sins, but faith alone (*Ep. 75: 12; Migne, P.L. 3, 1183; 3, 1199*). In his Catechism he explains that "he who believes can immediately obtain pardon" (*Migne, P.L. 4, 788*), "that all sins are put away in Baptism" (*p. 799*), and "that even the baptized loses the grace that he has attained unless he keeps his state of innocency" (*Migne, P.L. 4, 781*). St. Cyprian, therefore, followed St. Clement of Rome in teaching that one must keep his baptism vow holy and undefiled. Pope Cornelius (*Breviary, Sept. 16*), personal friend of St. Cyprian, blindly followed the latter in his teachings on Baptism. Like the African Church, the Church of Rome had a catechumenate and Adult Baptism at least since the year 200 A.D.

St. Augustine (d. 430), Bishop of Hippo, Africa, maintained a catechumenate, believed in Adult Baptism by immersion, and baptized children only when in danger of death. Yet, like St. Cyprian, he did not condemn those who baptized all children. We see, therefore, that the dispute about Adult and Infant Baptism may be as old as the Church itself.

The early popes of Rome, up to the time of Leo the Great (d. 461), were men of little or no learning. Contrary to



Africa and Egypt, Rome does not seem to have known the doctrine of Original Sin. When the 'pre-Patrician' Irish hermit, Pelagius, arrived in Rome and preached that "infants, though unbaptized, have eternal life" (*Augustine, On the Works of Pelagius, chapt. 11; Migne, P.L. 44, 334*), Pope Zosimus (417) supported his theological views. St. Augustine immediately attacked this view of Rome. Following the teachings of the East (*Migne, P.G. 6, 47*), Augustine wrote in 418 his famous book: "De Gratia Christi et de Peccato Originale" (*Migne, P.L. 44, 359*). They called an African Council and forced Pope Zosimus to recant. Yet the Pelagian heresy (400-529) continued to flourish in Italy for more than a century. Beginning with the 7th century (Gregory the Great) the Roman Catechumenate was reduced to 40 days, and by the middle of the 9th century abolished altogether. As the Agape and Catechumenate gradually disappeared, Rome gradually introduced Infant Baptism.

With the exception of a few national churches and a few local bishops Adult Baptism was the established practice of the 3rd and 4th-century Church. The profession of faith by the adult catechumen was considered essential to the valid reception of baptism. Children who had professed their faith through 'sponsors' were barred from the ministry: "If anyone has been baptized while ill, he cannot be promoted to the Presbyterate, because his profession of faith was not voluntary, but of necessity" (*Council of Neo-Caesarea; Mansi 2, 541*).

Roman Catholic scholars ascribe the origin of Infant Baptism to the abolition of the Catechumenate: "When all fear of persecution had passed away, and the empire had become almost entirely Christian, the necessity for a prolonged period of trial and instruction no longer existed. About the same time the fuller teaching on the subject of original sin, occasioned by the Pelagian heresy, gradually led to the ad-

ministration of Baptism to infants. In such cases instruction was, of course, impossible" (C.E. 5, 78). "With the increasing development of the doctrine of grace and original sin, the practice of early Baptism became the rule . . . Hence the catechumenate gradually fell into disuse" (C.E. 3, 431).

Here we have the admission by Catholic scholars that the Roman Church for many centuries lacked the full teaching on the subject of original sin, that she finally adopted the old teachings of the Church of Africa and Egypt, and consequently she adopted Infant Baptism which the Church of Egypt had practised from time immemorial. Other Catholic theologians seem to teach that Peter was the first infallible pope of Rome and that he undoubtedly preached the doctrine of Original Sin and of Infant Baptism. If so, it would follow that the oral traditions about Peter's teachings (42-67 A.D.) had been totally forgotten a century after his death. This could not have been the contention of the Council of Trent when it made tradition equal to the Word of God.

The greatest Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries, the very 'experts' on Baptism who wrote books on this subject, postponed their baptisms till the age of thirty, and then often submitted to Baptism only because it was required for ordination. The laity often postponed their baptism till the hour of death, because there was no second remission of mortal sins after Baptism. As Baptism is now called the first and the door of all sacraments and as the unbaptized are forbidden to partake of other Sacraments, the medieval custom of postponing Baptism till the hour of death proves that the early Church of Rome had no Sacraments of Penance, Extreme Unction, Matrimony, etc. The Fathers themselves were married before their Baptism.

St. Gregory Nazianzen (d. 389), Patriarch of Constantinople, President of the Ecumenical Council of 381, Saint, Father of the Church and author of a book "On Baptism,"



was born in a parsonage. His father was a bishop and Saint, his mother was St. Nonna. Yet these saintly parents did not have their baby baptized. Gregory postponed his baptism till he was thirty years of age, after which he was ordained, became Patriarch of Constantinople and President of the Catholic Church.

St. Basil (d. 379), St. John Chrysostom (d. 407), etc., the greatest of the Eastern Fathers postponed their baptisms. The greatest of the Western Fathers, like St. Augustine (d. 430), did likewise. As long as the Catechumenate existed not only Adult Baptism, but the postponement of Baptism was the rule.

St. Ambrose (d. 397), an Italian bishop, teacher of St. Augustine and author of a book on Baptism, postponed his baptism till the age of thirty-five: "Strange to say, like so many other believers of that age . . . he was still only a catechumen . . . received baptism . . . and eight days later . . . was consecrated bishop. He was now in his thirty fifth year" (*C.E.* 1, 384).

Emperor Valentinian II suddenly died as a catechumen without Baptism. According to modern Roman theology he was not a Christian and cannot go to heaven. However, in the eyes of St. Ambrose, who preached the funeral sermon, the emperor was the pillar of the church and assured of salvation (*Migne, P.L.* 16, 1418). Another pillar of the Italian church was Emperor Constantine the Great (d. 337). The Emperor's mother was St. Helena (a Unitarian lady). His own conversion was allegedly attested by miracles. He became the founder of the Catholic Church and convoked the first Ecumenical Council (325). Yet this great Emperor and 'Saint' was baptized on his death-bed by a Unitarian minister (*C.E.* 1, 709). This means that the founder of Ecumenicalism never received another Sacrament in his entire life, though he was legitimately married.

St. Jerome (d. 420), official Bible translator and Bible interpreter of the Church of Rome, postponed his baptism till he dedicated his life to Christ. Pope Leo the Great (d. 461), first of the Roman bishops to deserve the name of theologian, forbade Infant Baptism. He thought himself very lenient for allowing sick children and adults in danger of death to be baptized: "For while we put off the vows of those who are not pressed by ill health . . . we do not at any time refuse . . . anyone in danger of death: in the crisis of a siege, in the affliction of persecution, or in fear of a shipwreck" (*Pope Leo, Ep.* 16: 5; *Migne, P.L.* 54, 701). Not until after Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604), when the catechumenate was reduced to forty days and gradually became obsolete, did the Roman bishops admit healthy infants to Baptism.

Commenting on the Baptism of St. Augustine, the Catholic Encyclopedia relates: "Once, when very ill, he asked for baptism, but, all danger being passed, he deferred receiving the sacrament, thus yielding to a deplorable custom of the times" (*C.E.* 2, 84). It seems as easy for Roman theologians to condemn six centuries of Roman and papal traditions as to pronounce them equal to the Word of God.

Cardinal Newman, who wants to prove that Rome has the power and right to change Christian theology and Christian traditions, is anxious to admit that the early Latin Church had no Infant Baptism: "Neither in Rome, nor in Africa, was it then imperative on Christian parents, as it is now, to give baptism to their young children" (*Newman, Development of Christian Doctrine, rev. ed. N.Y., 1949, p.* 120).

Roman Catholics are instructed today to have their children baptized as soon as they are born. A Long Beach mother, for example, took her baby at the tender age of four months and the angry priest shouted: If you'd waited



any longer she could have walked here. We see that the Roman Church, which once condemned Infant Baptism by papal decree and which encouraged people to postpone their baptism even till death, now insists on Infant Baptism, and even practises pre-natal baptisms and instrument baptisms of fetuses.

Most Protestants believe in Infant Baptism. It seems an inconsistency to this writer (speaking as a historian, not as a theologian) that many ministers insist on administering Baptism to a crying (protesting) baby for fear that it may die without it. Yet when an old man rings the bell of a parsonage and begs to be baptized, he is refused until he is fully instructed. The Catechumenate for adults still exists, though the mortality rate among old men is 90 percent higher than among babies.

Before we speak of Immersion, we will very briefly note by whom, when and how Baptism was administered in the early church. The ordinary minister was the bishop (pastor). St. Ignatius (d. 107?), successor of St. Peter at Antioch, decreed: "It is not lawful without a bishop either to baptize or to celebrate the Lord's Supper" (*Migne, P.G.* 5, 714). By the end of the fourth century the city of Rome had so many converts and baptisms that chapels were built in the suburbs where "Assistant-Elders" (cardinal priests) were allowed to baptize, but forbidden to preside over the Lord's Supper. This was an emergency ruling, necessitated by the outlawing of paganism.

Pope Siricius (384-399) allowed the Elders to baptize even outside the Easter season (*Migne, P.L.* 13, 1188). Pope Leo IV (d. 853), who abolished the last remnants of the Catechumenate and Adult Baptism, decreed that Baptism could be administered on Holy Saturday (Easter) only, unless one is in danger of death (*Migne, P.L.* 115, 679). Hence some babies were still about one year old when they were baptized

*en masse*. Germany allowed two days for Baptism. St. Ulrich (d. 973), Bishop of Augsburg, allowed Baptism on Easter and Pentecost, and Communion on Christmas, Holy Thursday, Easter and Pentecost (*Migne, P.L.* 135, 1072). Bishop Burchard of Worms (1026) allowed Baptism on Easter and Pentecost only (*Migne, P.L.* 140, 729). Abbot Rupert (d. 1135) allowed solemn Baptism on Easter and Pentecost, and forbade it on Christmas (*Migne, P.L.* 170, 84 & 261). Thus we see that long after the final schism (1054) Roman Catholic babies still had to wait till the Easter season before they could be baptized. The danger of sudden death, therefore, was not too important in the early Church of Rome.

At the beginning of the third century the catechumen, after he had been baptized by immersion, was anointed with oil on the forehead to symbolize the power of the Holy Ghost. Bishop Tertullian (d. 230) already observed the pagan analogy: "Mithra signs the forehead of his soldiers" (*Migne, P.L.* 2, 66). After Baptism the new members (faithful) were immediately admitted to the Mystery of the Lord's Supper. When Adult Baptism was abolished, Rome continued to serve Communion right after Infant Baptism. As the child could not swallow the bread, it received the wine only. Bishop William of Champeaux (d. 1121) explains: "For this reason the cup alone is given to infants just baptized, because they cannot use bread" (*Migne, P.L.* 163, 1039). Thus we see that the Roman Catholic Church had traditions and customs in the Middle Ages which seem almost unbelievable to the Roman Catholic of today. Infant Baptism also led to a personal confirmation of the baptismal vows when reaching maturity.

#### BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

The mention of Baptism by full immersion usually gives



the Roman Catholic a good laugh. He does not know that the Roman Church for 1,200 years baptized exclusively by immersion, that it was still practised in Italy as late as the 16th century, that the Greek Orthodox Church still baptizes by immersion, and that there are about one million Roman Catholics in the United States who have been baptized by immersion (the Uniats). The Greek Orthodox Church holds that Baptism by pouring is invalid. Roman Catholics of the Eastern Rites, though they may not condemn Western practices, are so opposed to pouring that many may doubt the validity of the baptism of their adopted pope of the West.

Archaeology, rituals and canon laws prove that the medieval Church of Rome used baptistries which looked as much like swimming pools as the modern fonts look like bird baths. The early Baptismal fonts were not "up," but "down." Pope Siricius (d. 399) decreed that those to be baptized are to descend into the font (in fonte quoque ipsi descendunt) (*Migne, P.L. 13, 1188*).

Martin Luther in 1519 testified that immersion was still practised in the West, and that it was a late custom "only to pour the baptismal water on them out of a font; nevertheless the former is what should be done" (*Luther, "On Baptism"; cf. Luther's Works, Am. ed., vol. 35, p. 29*).

Catholic scholars are usually very frank in admitting the late origin of their Infant Baptism and their Baptism by pouring. They feel that the time and methods of Baptism (when and how) are merely customs which are not related to the efficacy (what) of Baptism. They hold that few Protestants have preserved the doctrine of the early church.

"Catholics admit that immersion brings out more fully the meaning of the Sacrament (Rom. vi, 3, 4; Col. ii, 12; Tit. iii, 5; Eph. v, 27), and that for twelve centuries it was the common practice. St. Thomas tells us it was the common practice in the thirteenth century" (*Father Conway, Ques-*

*tion Box, p. 240*). "In the Latin Church, immersion seems to have prevailed until the twelfth century. After that time it is found in some places even as late as the sixteenth century" (*C.E. 2, 262*). "The Orthodox always baptize by immersion . . . they have gone so far as to rebaptize all Latins who join their church" (*Conway, p. 240*).

The early Christians of Rome were baptized in the Tiber. By the fifth century the suburban churches were equipped with baptistries where adults were baptized in a large basin filled with water from the aqueducts. From the 7th to the 9th century Rome gradually introduced Infant Baptism and introduced the first "fonts" (fountain), rising above the ground. These fonts were still large enough for the immersion of infants. The Holy Roman Empire departed from the use of plain water. On Holy Saturday, the day of Baptism, the water in the basin was blessed in great ceremony by mixing it with consecrated oils and exorcised salts. After the ceremony of Baptism the Holy Water (*aqua benedicta*) was preserved for emergency baptisms and for sprinkling.

"Reverence for the rite itself and for the water, which came in time to receive a special consecration, gave rise to . . . the preservation of the water . . . Immersion of children had become to be the rule . . . With the thirteenth century, however, simple infusion came by degrees to be adopted" (*C.E. 2, 274-275*).



## CHAPTER TWO

### CONFIRMATION

#### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "CHRISM" AND "CONFIRMATION"?

Confirmation is a Western Sacrament for teenagers who are anointed with sacred oil on their forehead by their bishop, imparting on them the Holy Ghost and making them "soldiers of Christ."

As long as Rome forbade Infant Baptism and encouraged the catechumens to postpone their baptism even till death, there was no Sacrament of Confirmation. However, Rome had a special baptismal rite for adults, known as "Chrisma" (anointing). Immediately after baptism and after the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17), the bishop anointed the forehead of the baptized adult. This rite of "Chrism" is still part of Infant Baptism in both East and West.

Long after Rome had introduced Infant Baptism the anointing remained known as "Chrism." The custom of renewing the baptismal vows at a later age came to be known as "Confirmation." As later copyists changed the old Greek "Chrisma" into the late Latin "Confirmatio," it is not easy to determine when the new name originated. Peter

Lombard (d. 1164?), Italian Archbishop of Paris, is probably the first to use "Confirmation" in his original lists of Sacraments (*Migne, P.L. 192, 841*).

Pope Alexander III (Roland, d. 1181) explained: "One must know that there are two Confirmations, one which is made on top of the head (in vertice) immediately after Baptism—about which nothing for the time being—, the other is made on the forehead (in fronte), about which these questions are raised: (1) By whom was it instituted? (2) Why? (3) What does it effect? and (4) By whom must it be administered?" He answers the first question: "It was instituted by the Apostles" (*"Die Sentenzen Rolands," Freiburg, 1891, p. 213*).

John Beleth (1190), French theologian, explains in his "Rationale" (chapt. 110) that the Apostles used no oil in Baptism, that Pope Clement (c. 100) added Chrism to the rite of Baptism, that "those to be baptized are anointed on top of their head (in vertice)", that Baptism must not be celebrated except on Holy Saturday and Pentecost, that in Confirmation the anointing is on the forehead (in fronte), and that those to be confirmed must know at least the Lord's Prayer and the Twelve Articles of Faith (*Migne, P.L. 202, 113-115*).

Thus in the latter part of the 12th century Confirmation became a new and separate Sacrament for adults who had been baptized as babies. The Confirmation rites are an exact duplication of the baptismal anointing. In modern baptisms the priest signs the forehead of the baby ("in fronte") with a cross to make him a soldier of Christ. The Sacred Oil (Chrism) in Baptism is now put on the breast, or rather on the front and back of the body ("in pectore et inter scapulas"). In the modern Baptism for adults, the convert is anointed on the forehead, ears, eyes, nose, mouth, breast and shoulders. This form of Adult Baptism has developed into

Extreme Unction for the dying. As in Baptism the confirmants have "sponsors" and are given a new Christian name. The Western priest is the minister of Baptism, the Western bishop alone may administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. In Confirmation the bishop once more uses Chrism and once more imparts the Holy Ghost, as if the same anointing by the priest at the time of Baptism had been without effect. Still greater confusion was created in 1910 when Pope Pius X changed the age of discretion from 14 to 7, and decreed that children from the age of seven must confess their sins to the priest and must receive Communion at least once a year. This pope forgot to change the age for Confirmation. We now find Roman Catholic children of the age of nine who have received three Sacraments (Baptism, Penance and Eucharist) and who receive Communion daily, yet they have not been "confirmed" in the faith.

The Fathers knew only two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (*see Hist. of Dogma, vol. 2*). Later theologians speak of "Chrism", but not of "Confirmation". In their lists of Sacraments Chrism was placed immediately after Baptism, because it was part of Baptism. According to modern Roman practices Confirmation should be listed after the Eucharist and Penance. Because the Council of Trent (Session 7) has made it a dogma of faith that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Confirmation, Roman scholars are afraid to give the true history of this rite. When forced to write on the subject they are in great pains and employ all sorts of jesuitical negatives to trick the reader into deducing the wrong conclusions:

"Before the time of Tertullian the Fathers do not make any explicit mention of Confirmation as distinct from Baptism . . . We can indeed detect more than the mere germ of it in Holy Scripture, but we must not expect to find there an exact description of the ceremony as at present performed

. . . In passing from the Holy Scripture to the Fathers we naturally expect to find more . . . but they did not enter into minute discussions" (*C.E. 4, 217*). It is a pity that scholars must stoop to such double talk and nonsense in order to escape the penalty of excommunication.

The Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic churches of the Eastern rites (Uniates) do not have a Sacrament of Confirmation, that is, a mass anointing of adults by a bishop. In the East the rite of "Chrism" still follows Infant Baptism and is therefore performed by the same minister (the priest). To obtain military aid from the West the Greek Orthodox Church in the 15th century was willing to call her baptismal "Chrism" a separate Mystery and thus attained the same number of Sacraments as the West. This political agreement, signed under duress, does not change the historical and dogmatic development of Infant Chrism into Adult Confirmation. As the Western priest cannot validly administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, but is allowed to anoint the infant with Chrism in the Rite of Baptism, it is clear that the priestly rite of Chrism and the episcopal rite of Confirmation are no longer identical.

For the benefit of those who still believe that I am engaged in the antics of semantics, let me make it clear that no one less than Cardinal Newman agrees with me: "Baptism is developed into Confirmation" (*Newman, Development of Christian Doctrine, rev. ed., N.Y. 1949, p. 87*).



## HOLY ORDERS

WHEN DID THE PRIEST RECEIVE THE POWER TO  
BLESS AND TO FORGIVE SINS?

It is difficult to write on the Sacrament of Priestly Ordination without repeating what has been said under such subjects as: the Seven Sacraments, the Sacrament of Penance, the Absolution form, the Remission text (John 20:23), the Mass, the difference between Presbyter and Priest, etc. To avoid repetition we will limit our discussion to the ordination rites of priests and to their power of blessing and forgiving sins.

Up to the 9th century the Latin word "Sacerdos" denoted a bishop, overseer or pastor of a church, and from the 9th to the 11th century it denoted a bishop who presided over a diocese. Up to the 11th century Presbyters or Elders were never called *sacerdotes*. When they began to say Masses they received the name of Mass-priest (*sacerdos missalis*). During the 12th and 13th century the Presbyter was only a priest during Mass. Gradually the bishops delegated more of their own powers to the Elders. The Council of Trent

defined the powers and duties of both bishops and priests.

The modern Roman Catholic Ritual for the Ordination of Priests is an amalgamation of episcopal and presbyteral duties, and a confusion of terms, because the rites are of a different origin and antiquity. Almost everywhere the word "presbyterus" (elder) has been preserved, and the term is explained: "that they may prove themselves to be seniors". Only once in the entire rite the term "sacerdos" is used: "A priest must bring offerings, bless, preside, preach and baptize" (*Pontificale Romanum*). This sentence has been taken from the Ordination of Bishops.

When we briefly consider these five duties of the "sacerdos" we realize (1) that the power of forgiving sins is absent because the early bishops did not receive this power; (2) that the word "Mass" is absent because the early church did not know the term; (3) that in the early church only bishops were allowed to hold eucharistic offerings; (4) that before the ninth century no presbyter was allowed to bless; (5) that only bishops "presided" over the agape and concelebrations; and that modern priests are not presidents, but celebrants; (6) that in the early church only the bishop preached; (7) that the early presbyters were not allowed to baptize.

St. Ignatius (d. 107?), successor of St. Peter and third bishop of Antioch, writes: "Let no man perform anything pertaining to the church without the bishop. Let this be considered a valid Thanksgiving (Eucharist) over which a bishop presides . . . It is not permitted either to baptize or to celebrate the Lord's Supper without a bishop" (*Migne, P.G. 5, 714*). About one thousand years later the Church of England warned: "That in churches no Masses are to be celebrated except by consecrated bishops" (*Mansi 20, 460*). Before the 11th century the Mass was a "concelebration" and Baptism was held once a year. Naturally the local bishop (pastor) presided over these functions in person.



## PRIESTLY POWER OF BLESSING

Blessing is the opposite of cursing. Malediction is to say or wish something bad, benediction is to say or pronounce something good. The early Christian church was careful not to overindulge in either one. Only a bishop pronounced a benediction, and if he were not a very holy man his benediction was regarded as of little value. The Council in Trullo (692) ruled: "He is unfit to bless another who needs to take care of his own wounds" (*Mansi 11, 954*).

The conversion of Germany introduced the blessing of things other than bread, such as Holy Water, Holy Candles, etc. As the German bishops moved into palaces, the presbyter was given the right to bless. Emperor Charlemagne introduced the presbyteral blessing at the Council of 814 (*Mansi 13, 1082*). Rome did not fully adopt the German practice till 300 years later.

Amalarius of Metz (9th cent.), himself a Presbyter, is the first to mention the priestly blessing in his work "On Ecclesiastical Offices", second book "On Holy Orders", chapter 13 (*Migne, P.L. 105, 193*). Pope Nicholas in 864 protested against the new German custom, but the German Church added the novelty to the text of the Gregorian Sacramentary, giving the German Presbyters the following power: "Whatsoever they may bless, may the same be blessed" (*Migne, P.L. 78, 223*). This ordination power was not in the original Gregorian Sacramentary, nor in the Leonine Sacramentary of Rome (*Migne, P.L. 55*), nor in the early Sacramentaries of France (*P.L. 72*), of Spain (*P.L. 85*), or any other country.

Father Edmond Martène (d. 1739), the greatest Roman scholar in the history of Roman liturgy, in his work "De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus" is unable to find in his history of ordinations an *ordo* for presbyteral blessing older than the 9th century: "ut quaecumque benedixerint, benedicta sint" (*Bk 1, chapt. 8, Art. 11*).

In the 11th century the great German canonist, Bishop Burchard of Worms (d. 1025), mentions in his *Decretum* the German practice of allowing Presbyters to bless (*Migne, P.L. 140, 629*). The great Roman Catholic canonist, John Gratian (c. 1150), mentions the German practice in his *Decretum* (*Migne, P.L. 187, 134*). It was not till after John Gratian and Peter Lombard that the Roman Presbyter officially received the power both to bless people and things, and to consecrate altar bread.

Father Michel Andrieu, professor of the Catholic University of Strasbourg, in 1938 wrote four volumes on the Roman Ritual of the Middle Ages (*Le Pontifical Romain au moyen-âge; Vatican City, 1938; Studi e Testi, No. 86*). The 12th-century Pontificale Romanum instructs the bishop to ordain the Presbyter by anointing his hands with oil, saying: "Ut quaecumque consecraverint, consecrentur . . . That whatsoever they may consecrate, may the same be consecrated, and whatsoever they may bless, may the same be blessed" (*Andrieu, Pontifical Romain du 12<sup>e</sup> siècle; vol. 1, p. 136*).

The 13th-century Roman Ritual for the ordination of Presbyters uses the word "sacerdos" as in the Roman Ritual of today: "Sacerdotem oportet offerre, benedicere, praeesse, predicare et baptizare" (*Andrieu, Pontifical Romain du 13<sup>e</sup> siècle; vol. 2, p. 343*). As we commented before, the power of forgiving sins is still not mentioned here, though auricular confession was instituted in 1215 by Pope Innocent III. If the Roman Presbyter before the 12th century was not authorized to pronounce the benediction, he certainly was not authorized to forgive sins.

All rites of ordination have been modeled after the rite of a sacrament. Each ceremony consists of matter and form, that is, a symbolic object and some ritualistic words. When the 12th-century bishop bestowed on the presbyter-elect the



power of blessing and consecrating, he vested him with a chasuble and said: "May the Lord invest you with the stole of innocence (stola innocentiae)" (*Andrieu, Pont. Rom., vol. 1, p. 136*). Thus the new presbyteral chasuble is still referred to as a stole. In the 13th-century Pontifical of Durandus the form has been changed into: "Accipe vestem sacerdotalem . . . Receive the vestment of the priest" (*Andrieu, vol. 3, p. 368*).

Another form of the sacrament is the paten, a flat golden plate on which the Host rests. When the bishop gives the presbyter-elect the paten, he says: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate Mass for the living as well as for the dead . . . that you may offer expiatory sacrifices for the sins and offences of the people" (*Andrieu, Pontifical Romain du 12<sup>e</sup> siècle; vol. 1, p. 137*). Here the 12th-century Presbyter receives the power to bring sacrifices for sin, but he still does not receive the power to hear confessions and to forgive sins by absolution.

#### PRIESTLY POWER OF FORGIVING SINS

The most momentous ceremony of the modern rite of Priestly Ordination takes place after the recital of the Litany of All Saints and the Apostles' Creed. The bishop says to the priest-elect: "Accipe Spiritum Sanctum: quorum remisseris peccata . . . Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall remit, they are remitted". Here the modern priest receives the power of hearing private confessions and of forgiving the sins of his fellowmen.

Under Penance we will explain that the Fathers of the Church knew nothing of such powers, neither for Presbyters nor for Bishops. Here we shall only examine the medieval rituals. The 'Remission text' in the Rite for Priestly Ordination cannot be found in any ritual composed before the 13th century, when auricular confession came into existence.

The Leonine Sacramentary, falsely attributed to Pope Leo (d. 461), has three chapters on the consecration of bishops, presbyters and deacons, but it does not have a single word about the alleged power of forgiving sins. The Gregorian Sacramentary, a falsified forgery of the Holy Roman Empire (800), contains the rites of ordination, but it knows nothing about the power of forgiving sins. The early rituals of Western Europe (*Migne, P.L. 72; 85*) have no 'remission text' for the rite of ordination.

Amalarius of Metz (9th cent.) in his book "On Ecclesiastical Offices" wrote a treatise "On Presbyters", but he does not know of a priestly power to remit sin (*Migne, P.L. 105, 1088*). Bishop Rabanus Maurus (9th cent.), Primate of Germany who believed in two Sacraments, wrote a book on Holy Orders which does not have the remission text (*Migne, P.L. 112, 1165*). The French theologians of the 9th century, like Paschasius Radbertus (*Migne, P.L. 120, 1275*), Ratramus of Corbie (*Migne, P.L. 121, 146*) and Florus of Lyons (*Migne, P.L. 119, 15*), taught that there are two Sacraments, and consequently they do not know the priestly power of forgiving sins.

All the 'Roman Catholic' canonists and liturgists of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, including St. Yves (d. 1116), Bishop of Chartres ("Decretum"; *Migne, P.L. 161, 59*) and Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141) ("De Sacramentis"; *Migne, P.L. 176, 429*), omit the remission text when treating on the ordination of priests. In the 13th century Bishop Sicardus of Cremona gives a detailed description of the rites of ordination in his book "De Ordinibus", which is the second book of his Summa on Ecclesiastical Offices (*Migne, P.L. 213*). The 13th-century Subdeacon receives a "maniple" (p. 63); the Deacon receives a "stole" (p. 64); the Presbyter receives a "chasuble" and receives the power to say Mass (p. 65); but he has no remission text, and therefore the priest did not

receive the power to forgive sins (*Migne, P.L. 213, 65*).

The great Papal Secretary and liturgist, Bishop William Durandus (d. 1296), wrote his famous "Rationale Divinorum Officiorum" (Venice, 1568) wherein he treats on Holy Orders, yet as papal liturgist he does not know the remission text for the ordination of presbyters. We must, therefore, conclude that as late as 1286 the Vatican itself did not know that the remission text was part of the ordination rites of a priest. Among the lists of books accredited to Durandus is a "Pontificale Romanum" which became lost. According to Prof. Adrian Fortescue it was still lost in 1913 (*C.E. 5, 207*). According to Prof. Andrieu (1938) the Pontificale of Durandus has been found and it contains the remission text for the ordination of priests.

In the recently found Pontifical of William Durandus the bishop says to the priest-candidate: "Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall remit the same are remitted" (*Durandus, Pontifical, bk 1, chapt. 13, art. 25; Michel Andrieu, vol. 3, p. 372*). If this Pontifical is genuine, it would follow that at the very end of the 13th century the first ritual appeared containing the remission text and giving the priest the power to forgive sins. This tremendous new power of the priest then was sneaked into a ritual without the approval of a General Council or Papal Bull.

The Henry Bradshaw Society for the editing of rare liturgical texts (London, 1891-1934) published 73 volumes of rare rituals, including the Gregorian Sacramentary, Gallican Sacramentary, Bobbio Missal, Canterbury Benedictional, Hereford Pontifical, etc. Not one of these medieval rituals has the remission text. The Hereford Pontifical, for example, used in Hereford, England, from the 12th to the 14th century, does not have the remission text (*Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 39, p. 68*). We must, therefore, conclude that the priestly power to forgive sins was sneaked into Western

rituals at the very end of the Middle Ages, and that these powers were later dogmatically defined by the Council of Trent (*Oct. 11, 1551; Session 14; Mansi 33, 95-101*).

In the earlier rites of ordination the consecrating bishop and presbyters lay their hands on the candidate for the presbyterate and say: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and may the power of the Highest keep thee without sins." Instead of conferring the power to forgive the sins of others, the bishop deprecatorily prays that the new priest may keep his own nose clean. Thus the doctrines of the church keep changing.

We will not treat here on the ordination of bishops, nor on the ordination of the lower orders: tonsurites, porters, lectors, exorcists and acolytes, because the subject is of less importance. Before the modern priest can be ordained he must go through the ordinations of all the lower orders though nearly all the offices have become extinct.

## DEACONESSSES

We should like to conclude with a historical fact which is little known among the Roman Catholic priests themselves, namely: the ordination of female deacons. The early church selected both deacons and deaconesses to assist the clergy in church work. When the diaconate was elevated to an order, both deacons and deaconesses received ordination. During the 4th and 5th centuries, when thousands of pagan agapetae (nuns) joined the church, the moral standards among church women left much to be desired. Deaconesses gradually became celibate nuns. The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) decreed: "No one shall be ordained Deaconess unless she is forty years of age. If she shall dishonor her ministry by contracting marriage, let her be anathema" (*Mansi 6, 1228*). Monastic celibacy not only led to the ordination of Deaconesses and Abbesses, but even of



Priestesses and Bishopesses (*see C.E. 3, 484*).

Bishop William Durandus (d. 1296) in his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* still has a chapter on the ordination of the deaconess (*De Ordinatione Diaconissae*) and informs us that she received the stole or orarium (*Rationale, bk 1, chapt. 22, art. 1*). When concelebrations were abolished in the 13th century, not only the offices of the lower orders became for all practical purposes extinct, but the order of deaconesses gradually disappeared. It survived, however, in some monasteries. The Carthusian nuns of today, for example, are still ordained Deacons and Subdeacons, and vested with stole and maniple these nuns chant Solemn Masses, thus singing souls out of Purgatory (*see C.E. 3, 391-392; Cath. Dict. by Attwater, 1961 ed., p. 517*).

## EXTREME UNCTION

### *DID 'EXTREME UNCTION' EXIST DURING THE FIRST THOUSAND YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY?*

Extreme Unction is a sacrament for "the dying only". In this sacrament the priest anoints the body with oil at the moment of death. It originated as a church-instituted rite (sacramental) at the end of the 12th century and it was almost immediately classified among the seven sacraments of the 13th century. Because of the huge fee charged for this new sacrament, it was not accessible to the peasants of the West. The Waldenses, a French sect which originated in 1180, immediately attacked the new rite as a new racket and superstition, but the fires and the sword of the Inquisition silenced all opposition. Neither the name of Extreme Unction nor the practice of anointing the bodies of the dying exists in the Eastern Church.

We know that the early church had only two sacraments. Anyone ought to understand that the Christians of the first seven centuries would not have postponed their Baptism until death if the Sacraments of Penance and of Extreme

Unction had existed. Gregory of Bergamo, a 12th-century Italian bishop, still does not list Penance and Extreme Unction among his seven sacraments. The scholars of the Catholic Encyclopedia, who are forced to profess that Extreme Unction was instituted by Christ, dare to go as far as stating: "The name 'Extreme Unction' did not become technical in the West till towards the end of the twelfth century, and has never become current in the East . . . The abuses connected with its administration which prevailed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and which tended to make it accessible only to the rich, gave the Waldenses a pretext for denouncing it as the *ultima superbia*" (C.E. 5, 716-717). As with the origin of indulgences there is no question of abuse. Both started out as a fraud and superstition, invented, approved and defended by the hierarchy itself.

In the era of the Fathers of the Church people "asked" for Baptism, either after they had been fully converted and instructed, or in danger of death. If the dying person was a catechumen, he was baptized and received Communion. If the dying person was a public penitent (one who had committed adultery, idolatry or murder after his Baptism), he was reconciled with the Church and received Communion. If the dying person was a baptized Christian who had remained "faithful", the Western Church administered the "Viaticum", that is, the Communion for the dying, but the faithful were not anointed. Only the unbaptized catechumen had his body anointed at the hour of death. This was not his "last" anointing, but his first baptismal anointing ("Chrism").

The modern Roman Catholic rite for Adult Baptism (Baptism of a convert) still insists on the "signing" of the entire body. The priest uses his thumb to sign the adult catechumen's forehead (frontem), the ears (aures), the eyes (oculos), the nostrils (nares), the mouth (os), the breast or chest (pec-

tus), the shoulders (scapulas) and finally says: "I sign thee completely". The ritual explains the last sign: "over the entire body", but it wisely instructs the priest: "without touching" (non tangens) (*Ordo Baptismi adultorum; Rituale Romanum, Rome, Vatican Press, 1926, p. 41*).

When the Anglo-Saxon (or Irish) penitential system slowly supplanted the first public penitential system of the West (7th to 9th century), the Catechumenate with its Adult Baptism became gradually extinct. When the dying no longer received the baptismal anointing, the West borrowed from the East the biblical practice of anointing "the sick" (*James 5:14*). This anointing of the sick, together with the Viaticum for the sick, the reconciliation of the penitent at the time of death, and the late indulgence for the dying, developed into "the last rites" and into another sacrament "for the dying only". Before the conversion of Northern Europe (8th cent.) Rome had no other Sacraments for the dying than Baptism and Communion. From 800 to 1200 A.D. Rome anointed "the Sick" (not the dying) which was not considered a sacrament. From the 13th century on Rome had a new sacrament for the "dying only", which supplanted the biblical practice of anointing the "sick".

The modern Roman Catholic rite for Extreme Unction still insists that the priest puts oil on his thumb and that he anoints the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the hands and the feet of the dying, saying: "Through this holy Unction and by His most holy mercy, may the Lord grant thee pardon from whatever faults thou has committed by sight (hearing, smell, taste, touch and walking)" (*Rituale Romanum, Rome, 1926, p. 147*). The post-Reformation Ritual of Pope Paul V (17th cent.) instructs the priest to anoint also "the loins or kidneys" (*Rituale Romanum, 1617, p. 82*). The latter shows to what 'extremes' man-made sacraments will go to point out the "signified grace".



The Baltimore Catechism states: "We know that Christ instituted this Sacrament from the words: 'Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord' (James 5:14)" (*Baltimore Catechism*, No. 3, question 330). Let us first point out that Christ did not say those words, but that they were written by James, the bishop of Jerusalem. This apostolic advice does no more constitute a sacrament than the divine direction by Christ Himself "to wash one another's feet" (*John 13:14*) which St. Bernard listed among his three sacraments. Secondly, Bishop James did not tell the twelve tribes to anoint only "the dying", but "anyone sick". A person may be sick twenty to forty times in his life, but a Roman Catholic priest may not administer Extreme Unction until the doctor pronounces that the patient is actually "dying". Thirdly, the Bible does not speak of "priests" (sacerdotes), but of "elders" (presbyteros), as one can see in the Latin Vulgate. Furthermore, the word "elders" is plural and does not signify that a single priest should disrobe the sick and anoint all his organs. The modern Roman Sacraments are said to work automatically (*ex opere operato*), while the prayers of Christians over a sick fellow-Christian are no more infallible than any other prayer by the church: "And the prayer of faith shall heal the sick". Martin Luther observed that scarcely one in a thousand recovers after Extreme Unction, and when in an exceptional case some one does recover, Roman Catholics ascribe the feat to the doctor.

The text of James does not at all refer to the institution of a new sacrament, but explains how the faithful can live by faith: "(1) Is anyone among you depressed? Let him pray. (2) Is anyone among you gay? Let him sing psalms. (3) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call the elders of the church," etc. This is not an enumeration or list of new sacraments essential to salvation, but an apostolic instruction

in the art of Christian living. James did not create new sacraments for the gay, the sad, the sick, etc., nor is the anointing of sick Christians any more a sacrament than the singing of psalms by merry Christians.

For 800 years Rome neglected to anoint her sick, and when she introduced the custom in the ninth century, her theologians still maintained that there were only two sacraments. Naturally, the origin of the Western Sacrament for the dying must be other than biblical.

Joseph Tixeront (d. 1925) starts his treatise on Extreme Unction: "Our readers know how few and vague are the traces in ancient Greek theology of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction" (*Tixeront, History of Dogma*, vol. 3, p. 250). This is an understatement, for the Greeks have no "last anointing" nor an anointing of the "extremities" of the dying. The Eastern rite is called "Euchelaion" consisting of a prayer of faith whenever and as often as a member may be sick. The early Church of Rome had neither an anointing for the sick, nor for the dying. Rheims (France) seems to have been the first Western bishopric to introduce the anointing of "the sick", after which the Holy Roman Empire adopted the custom. The canons of the Holy Roman Empire, attributed to Charlemagne (814), prescribe that whenever the presbyters (plural) are called to the "sick" (*quando ad infirmum accedunt*), they should carry with them some "oil" (*Council of Charlemagne*, 814, canon 19; *Mansi* 13, 1083). Neither the Bible nor this council speaks of "consecrated" oil. The same council speaks of the "dying" in canons 8 and 11, but, like all early councils, is silent about a "last" sacrament for them (*Mansi* 13, 1083). Once Germany had adopted the rite for the sick it was added to the Gregorian Sacramentary. Bishop Rabanus Maurus of Mainz did not list it among the sacraments. The Penitential of Egbert, attributed to St. Egbert (d. 766), Bishop of York, which is actually



"a ninth century Frankish compilation" (C.E. 5, 326), speaks only of Communion for the dying and has nothing to say about a last anointing (*canon 22; Migne, P.L. 89, 382*).

After the final Schism (1054) the Italian Bishop, Bonizo (d. 1089) still held that Christ had instituted two Sacraments and that the Church had instituted the Sacrament of Salt and the "Sacrament of Oil". This last Sacramental he divided into: the Oil of Baptism, the oil of the now abolished catechuminate, and the "Oil of the Sick" (*Migne, P.L. 150, 862*). The anointing of the sick is now becoming a sacramental, but there is still no trace of a special sacrament for the "dying". The Summa attributed to Bishop Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141) has a chapter called: "On the Sacrament of Oil, or of Extreme Unction" (*Migne, P.L. 176, 153*). The second part of the title is an interpolation. This Pseudo-Hugo distinguishes between the "sick" and "dying". In his chapter "On the Unction of the sick" (*De unctione infirmorum*) he says nothing about the dying (*Migne, P.L. 176, 578*), and in his chapter "On the dying" (*De morientibus*) he says nothing about anointing (*Migne, P.L. 176, 579*).

In the 12th century the Italian Bishop Gregory of Bergamo (d. 1146) becomes the first human being to enumerate seven sacraments. Instead of Extreme Unction and Penance, he lists the Bible and the Oath. He does not even list Extreme Unction as a minor sacrament (*H. Hurter, Sanctorum Patrum Opuscula, vol. 39, p. 58*). Gregory's contemporary, Peter Lombard (d. 1164?), is the first to arrive at seven sacraments identical to those adopted by Trent, but his name of "Extreme Unction" might be a later correction for the more common "Oil of Unction".

Pope Alexander III (Roland, d. 1181) wrote a Summa which treats on the Sacraments. One chapter is entitled: "On the Oil of Unction, which is the sacrament of dignity", and he explains that "it was instituted by the Apostles and

in their time" (*Die Sentenzen Rolands, Freiburg, 1891, p. 262*). He does not mention a last anointing.

By the 13th century both the name of Extreme Unction and the practice of anointing the dying for a huge fee was well established. Both the Council of London (A.D. 1237) (*Mansi 23, 448*) and the Council of Lyons (A.D. 1274) (*Mansi 24, 71*) mention "Extreme Unction". Bishop William Durandus (d. 1296) in his *Rationale* (Bk 1, chapt. 8) explains that Extreme Unction is for the dying: "Extreme Unction, which from the institution of Pope Felix IV and from the precept of the Apostle James, is administered to those who are dying. Concerning which some say that it is not properly a sacrament like Chrism" (*Durandus, Rationale; Venice, 1568, p. 28*). Thus at the end of the 13th century some theologians still regarded the new rite for the dying as a sacramental.

The Council of Trent (1551) in its 14th Session ruled that Extreme Unction is a sacrament instituted by Christ, and that the oil for this sacrament is to be blessed by the bishop (*Mansi 33, 98*). For this reason every parish priest must make a trip on Holy Thursday to the capital of the diocese to obtain his year's supply of episcopal oil. Before the Council of Trent, some countries of the West continued to anoint only the forehead as in the older anointing of the sick. After the Council of Trent the Western theologians ruled that this sacrament was invalid unless the whole body was anointed and unless the oil had been blessed by a bishop. Theological difficulties arose when a group of Easterners joined the Western Church (Uniates) and were tacitly or secretly permitted to continue their ancient practice of anointing the "sick" on the "forehead". The Catholic Encyclopedia maintains "that the unction of the five senses has never been extensively practised in the East, and is not practised at the present time in the Orthodox Church, while those Uniates who practise it have simply borrowed it in modern



times from Rome, and that even in the Western Church down to the eleventh century the practice was not widespread, and did not become universal till the seventeenth century, as is proved by a number of sixteenth-century Rituals that have been preserved. In the face of these facts it is impossible any longer to defend the Scholastic view (concerning the valid matter of this sacrament) except by maintaining that the church has frequently changed the essential matter of a sacrament, or that she allowed it to be invalidly administered during the greater part of her history, as she still allows without protest in the East" (C.E. 5, 724). This daring kind of logic is supposed to leave no choice to timid theologians, but it exposes the sinking sand on which the Roman sacramental system is built.

When a Protestant minister visits the sick in a hospital he wears a broad smile, shakes hands with the patient, asks him about his health, reads a portion of Scripture, offers a prayer for recovery, and comforts the patient by emphasizing that in case something would go wrong he has nothing to fear if he places his trust in his Saviour. Some ministers anoint the forehead of the sick with ordinary ointment when offering the prayer of faith.

When the Roman Catholic priest administers Extreme Unction he scares the patient to death. It is the preface to his funeral. Before the priest arrives the nurses have covered a table with white linen on which they have placed a crucifix, burning candles, Holy Water, saucer with salt, cotton, bread, etc. The priest arrives hurriedly with a stern face, befitting a Sacrament. He does not say Hello, nor does he speak English. While mumbling Latin phrases, unintelligible even to Julius Caesar, he pulls the covers down and starts to smear oil on the patient. The deprecativ form "may the Lord pardon" denies the alleged efficacy of a Roman Sacrament.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PENANCE

*WHAT IS THE MODERN SACRAMENT OF PENANCE? DOES THE PRIEST OF TODAY ACTUALLY CLAIM THE POWER OF FORGIVING SINS? WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH? WHAT DO THE FATHERS TEACH? HOW DO THE FATHERS INTERPRET THE REMISSION TEXT (JOHN 20:23)? WHAT FORM OF ABSOLUTION WAS USED IN THE MIDDLE AGES? WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PENITENTIAL SYSTEMS? WHAT IS THE MEDIEVAL PRACTICE OF ONE PENANCE FOR THE LAITY, NO PENANCE FOR THE CLERGY? WERE PRESBYTERS ALLOWED TO RECONCILE SINNERS? WHAT ARE THE PENITENTIAL BOOKS? WHAT ARE PECUNIARY PENANCES? IS CONFESSION ESSENTIAL TO OBTAINING THE REMISSION OF SINS? WHEN WAS AURICULAR CONFESSION INTRODUCED?*

The canon laws which are printed in the modern Roman Catholic ritual as a preface to the Sacrament of Penance (*Rituale Romanum*, Rome, 1926, p. 107-112), contain the following definition: "The holy Sacrament of Penance was instituted by Christ, the Lord, to restore unto the grace of God those who after Baptism lapsed back into sin" (*canon 1*). The *matter* of this sacrament is sin, and (1) contrition, (2) confession and (3) satisfaction. The *form* of this sacrament are the words of the absolution: "It is I who absolve thee



from thy sin". If any part of the essential matter and form is wanting, the sacrament is invalid and void. The ordinary minister of this sacrament is a priest who has the jurisdiction (permission or faculty) of his bishop. In danger of death "all priests" can validly and lawfully absolve (even an ex-priest). The same laws provide that the priest must wear a white surplice and purple stole in the confessional (*canon 10*). The priest may not absolve all sins. The Pope and the bishops may reserve the remission of some sins to themselves. The number and nature of "reserved sins" (assassination of a bishop, propagation of a certain heresy, etc.) are established by general and local canon laws. When a priest runs into a "reserved case", he must refuse the absolution and must ask the penitent to return after a special permission has been obtained from the Pope or the Bishop. In such a case it is not only impossible to hide the identity of the criminal from the priest, but the hierarchy is informed about the time and location at which a certain criminal confessed. Naturally, there is not much left of the so-called "seal" and secrecy of confession. "If the penitent is bound by some censure or by a reserved case . . . the priest may not absolve, unless first the faculty has been obtained from his Superior" (*canon 13*). This canon is interesting because of its terminology: binding and loosing, *ligare et solvere* (*Matt. 16:19*), which here refers to ecclesiastical penalties. The confessor can only loosen what he can bind. If the penitent does not confess in detail and neglects to mention the "number, kind and circumstances" of his sins, the priest is instructed to obtain this information by questioning (*canon 16*). Because of the centuries-old practice of charging money for penance, canon 21 still warns the priest that today he may not impose "pecuniary penances" (*poenitentias pecuniarias*) nor may he ask a stipend or "remuneration" (*praemium*) for his services (*Rituale Romanum*, p. 111). Canons 22 and

23 explain that the priest may only impose public penances for public sins, and may not impose public punishment for non-public sins. This rule is supposed to protect the "seal" of confession. In the Middle Ages, however, when the Penitential Canons listed every detail of every sin and prescribed public punishment according to set rules, Rome was not in the least concerned with the so-called "seal". Canon 24 of the Ritual rules that in danger of death the priest may absolve "from all sins and censures".

#### THE PRIEST OF TODAY ACTUALLY CLAIMS THAT HE HAS THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS

Not until the fifteenth century did Rome officially teach that the priest has the power of actually remitting the sins of his fellow man. When the 16th-century Reformers pointed out that the Remission text (John 20:23) refers to the preaching of the Gospel of repentance, the Council of Trent (*Nov., 1551*) condemned the Protestant view that the words of John "refer to the authority to preach the Gospel", and it condemned all Protestants with anathema who taught that the words of John "are not to be understood of the power of remitting or retaining sins in the Sacrament of Penance" (*Mansi 33, 101*).

We have already seen that the Remission text was not added to the Rite of Ordination of a priest till the very end of the 13th century. During the 14th and 15th centuries the theologians still explained that God alone remits the sins, but the priest has the power to bind and to loose the penitent from ecclesiastical penalties. Since the 16th century it has become a dogma of faith that the priest himself remits the sins. In the confessional the priest says: *Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis*, It is I who absolve thee from thy sins. To *absolve* (to loosen) is now considered to be a synonym for to *remit* (forgive) sin. Small Catechisms for First Communion



now teach: "Who forgives our sins? The priest forgives our sins." The Baltimore Catechism (No. 3) teaches: "Absolution is not a mere declaration that sins are forgiven, but an actual forgiving of sins" (*Question 245*). "Every priest receives in Ordination the power to forgive sin" (*Question 247*). The Knights of Columbus published an advertisement, stating: "Christ empowered Catholic priests not merely to announce that sins are forgiven, but actually to forgive sins". It is, therefore, an established fact that Rome today claims a power never assumed by the priests of the Old Testament, for "who can forgive sins but God alone" (*Mark 2:7*).

During the first two centuries Rome had no penitential system, whether public or sacramental. From about 200 to 800 A.D. Rome used the African Penitential system which was purely disciplinary and involved only ecclesiastical excommunication for the sins of idolatry, adultery and murder. All other sins were venial, that is, pardonable, and therefore carried no penalty of excommunication. From the days of the Holy Roman Empire (800) to the Reformation (16th cent.) Rome used the Anglo-Saxon Penitential System which was still disciplinary, but which included self-accusation or confession of non-public crimes. In the 12th century (that is, during the second penitential system), France invented the Sacrament of Penance which Rome adopted in the 13th century (1215). The new sacrament made confession to a priest obligatory. The Public Penitential system persisted alongside the sacrament of auricular confession for several centuries. From 1215 to 1439 theologians held that God forgives the sins of the penitent, but by divine institution He had given to the priest the power of binding and loosing, that is, of imposing ecclesiastical penalties and of absolving them. By the 15th century the priest also usurps the divine power of forgiving sins and by the 16th century the Anglo-Saxon system of Public Penances disappears (except in Milan,

Italy), leaving today only a few traces, such as the strange calculation of modern indulgences, forms of absolution and liturgical prayers.

The first Penitential system is explained by the Fathers and the early councils; the second Penitential system can be traced through the medieval penitential books, rituals, summas and councils; and the third or current system is explained by modern theologians. We will concentrate mostly on the history of the first two systems.

Because the ecclesiastical penances are centuries older than church-imposed confessions, the modern sacrament is called "Penance" (*paenitentia*) rather than "Confession". In order to understand the subject and terminology, we must first differentiate between penance and repentance. In classic Latin "*paenitentia*" meant *sorrow*, but in church Latin this word came to mean *church discipline, punishment*. Thus the word *paenitentia* became synonymous with *paena* (cf. penalty, penitent, penitentiary). The biblical word, *Repentance*, (Greek: *metanoia*) means the turning away from sin and the turning to God; thus it became synonymous with conversion or sorrow for sin. The difference between repentance and penance is the difference between contrition and satisfaction. In modern Roman Catholic theology contrition (sorrow) should exist before confession, while satisfaction (punishment) is made after confession. The first exists in the heart of the sinner, the second is imposed by the priest. The Baltimore Catechism (No. 3) explains: "The priest gives us a penance after confession to satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to our sins. We must suffer some punishment for every sin even if forgiven" (*Question 275*).

Salvation by self-punishment or by one's own merits is contrary to the Gospel of Grace. The N.T. Bible mentions the verb, to repent (*metanoeo*) 31 times and the noun, *re-*



*penance* (metanoia) 22 times. The Bible does not say: "Do penance", but it says: "Repent" (*Matt.* 3:2; 4:17). Peter did not explain to the Jews that Christ had come on earth to *punish* Israel, but to give them the grace of repentance (*Acts* 5:31). God is said to have granted the same gift of repentance to the gentiles (*Acts* 11:18; 20:21), and to desire the repentance of all people (*II Peter* 3:9). Paul did not explain to the Romans that the goodness of God leads to *punishment*, but to repentance or sorrow for sin (*Rom.* 2:4). The Roman Sacrament of 'Punishment', therefore, has nothing to do with the biblical cry: "Repent", that is, be converted.

The Bible speaks of the "wrath of God" (*John* 3:36), but not of ecclesiastical penalties. As public officers the priests of the Old Testament dealt with the punishment of criminals or public crimes, but left the punishment of hidden sins to God. The Hebrew priests did not hear confessions nor did they claim the power of remitting sins (*Luke* 5:21). As the New Testament is a "better covenant" (*Heb.* 8:6) it follows that the remission of sins remained the prerogative of God alone. Excommunication is biblical (*I Cor.* 16:22; *Matt.* 18:17), but not the practice of remission of sins through ecclesiastical punishment.

According to modern Roman Catholic thinking, Christ merely 'opened the gates of heaven', and left the entire process of salvation in the hands of mediatory priests. The Bible knows no other mediatory priest than Christ who is a personal Saviour. Christ is the Redeemer (payer) from all punishment to come; He alone atoned for all sins; He saves to the uttermost; He alone brought satisfaction for sin; He alone is the Mediator (*Heb.* 8:6; 9:15; *I Tim.* 2:5); He abolished the sacrifices for sin (*Heb.* 10:18; 10:26; 13:15; *I Peter* 2:5) and consequently the mediatory priesthood of the Old Testament. The New Testament does not refer to apostles as priests. Apostles, bishops, elders and evangelists are

preachers of repentance, not penitentiaries or sacrificers. They preach repentance, but do not impose penances. Peter did not build confession boxes in order to remit sin, but he preached repentance and advised the sinner to pray to God (*Acts* 2:38; 8:22). Nor did his successors build confession boxes; nor have Catholic archaeologists ever been able to dig up a confession box used by the Fathers of the Church.

We must distinguish between Penance, Confession of sins and Remission of sins. When we speak of Confession of sin we must further distinguish between public and private confession; general and itemized confessions; pre-conversion and post-conversion (post-baptismal) confessions; confessions to God and confessions to man; confessions to another, to the entire congregation, or to one particular priest.

The apostle Peter speaks of "the remission of sins", but he does not mention confession. He refers to repentance and Baptism (*Acts* 2:38). The apostle John speaks of the remission of sins (*John* 20:23), but he does not mention confession. In the early Church of Rome the excommunicated criminals performed penances, but they did not confess; while the faithful confessed their sins, but they did not perform penances. Most Roman Catholic theologians who are to prove that the Sacrament of Penance existed in the early centuries, will in desperation quote texts from the Fathers which refer to the pre-baptismal penances of the catechumenate, confessions of sin to God instead of to a priest, and even confessions of faith.

In the Greek New Testament Bible the word "confession" (homologia or exomologia) almost always refers to a confession of faith, not a confession of sin. Matthew and Mark mention confessions of sins (*Matt.* 3:6; *Mark* 1:5), but these are pre-baptismal confessions which could not be related to the Roman Sacrament of Penance for post-baptismal sins. The Apostle James mentions confession of sin (*James* 5:16),

but he advised his readers to confess "one to another". As these confessions were not judicial acts and did not require priestly powers, they could not refer to the Roman Sacrament of today. The apostle John mentions confession of sins (I John 1:9), but these confessions are to God and the remission is by God, not by a priest. There is not a verse in the Bible instructing man to confess his sins to a priest.

### SIN AND ITS REMISSION

The whole topic of the New Testament Scriptures is sin and its remission. Jesus came into the world "to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15), that He might "redeem us from all iniquity" (Tit. 2:15). For that reason He is called the Saviour, the Redeemer. It would be a pity if the hundreds of pages of the New Testament were unable to explain to man the method by which God intended to remit sin. If the method were by confessing sins to a Catholic priest, then the Bible neglected to say so. If the early Church of Rome had ever heard of a priest's power to remit sin, it would not have postponed Baptism until death.

In the Greek New Testament the verb "to remit" (*aphiemi*) is mentioned 146 times. Remission (*aphesis*), sin (*hamartia*), binding, loosing (absolving), baptism, faith, repentance, Holy Spirit, blood of Christ, sanctification, justification, etc., are mentioned hundreds of times, but the *Catholic Priest* with his absolution and remitting power is conspicuously wanting.

In the Lord's Prayer the people do not ask the priest, but they ask God: "And remit (*aphes*) us our debts, as we remit (*aphiemen*) our debtors" (*Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris; Matt. 6:12*). Christ taught that God remits sins and consequently He instructed his followers to ask God for the remission of their sins. Christ never mentioned the existence of New Testament priests.

- Matt. 1:21 "For He (Christ) shall save His people from their sins"
- 9:6 "That ye may know that the Son of Man (Christ) has the power to remit sins (*dimittendi peccata*)"
- 26:28 "For this is My blood (Christ's) of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission (*aphesis*) of sins."
- Acts 22:16 "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."
- Col. 1:14 "His dear Son (Christ) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission (*aphesis*) of sins."
- Heb. 1:3 "He (Christ) had by Himself purged our sins."
- 10:17 "Their sins and iniquities will I (God) remember no more."
- Rom. 4:8 "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord (God) will not impute sin."
- I John 1:7 "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (*ab omni peccato*)."
- 1:9 "He is faithful and just to remit us our sins (*ut remittat nobis peccata nostra*)."
- 3:5 "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins."

It is evident that God alone remits sins. In order that the sacrifice (blood) of Jesus Christ may purge the sinner from his sins, the sinner needs the Gospel, grace, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, the Holy Spirit, etc., but he does not need a priest. He needs only a minister who will preach the Gospel of repentance to him and will admit him to baptism. The minister is only an instrument through which God makes the sinner come to Him for the remission of sins. Those who believe are sanctified (made saints), those who reject the Gospel will die in their sins. The Gospel was



preached, not to merge, but to divide the world into saints and sinners, into the saved and the unsaved.

#### THE REMISSION TEXT (John 20:23)

"Whosoever sins ye remit (aphete), they are remitted (apheontai) unto them; whosoever ye retain, they are retained" (*John 20:23*).

The following are historical facts: (1) the early Church of Rome had no sacrament of penance; (2) the early Fathers explained that this text refers to the preaching of the Baptism of repentance; (3) the greatest of the Fathers explicitly taught that this text does not refer to human powers of remitting sins. Before we will quote the Fathers of the Church on this subject, and before my reader consults the traditional teachings of his denominational seminary, let us first give the Bible a chance to interpret itself. The words: "Whose sins you remit" were spoken by Christ after His death and resurrection. As Christ spoke very little after His resurrection and merely sent His disciples to the uttermost parts of the earth, it should be very easy to find the parallel texts of the other Gospels:

- Matt. 28:29 "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them."  
 Mark 16:15-16 "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."  
 Luke 24:47 "That repentance and remission of sins (aphesin hamartion; remissionem peccatorum) should be preached in His name among all nations."  
 John 20:23 "Whosoever sins ye remit (aphete), they are remitted."  
 Acts 1:5-8 "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit

. . . and you shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the ends of the earth."

- Acts 2:38 "Repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins (aphesin ton hamartion; in remissionem peccatorum)."

We see, therefore, that the "Remission" text and the "Mission" text are one and the same. Christ sent His disciples to the corners of the earth, not to hear confessions, but *to preach* the remission of sin. Christ is referring to the mission of preaching, witnessing and baptizing. Christ is sending His disciples into an unbaptized world which, according to modern Roman theology, could not receive any other sacrament than that of Baptism, because the Sacrament of Penance is for post-baptismal sins.

That John meant by "remission" the same as the other evangelists, namely, "the preaching of remission" is clear from the other chapters of his Gospel:

- John 3:16 "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."  
 3:18 "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already."  
 5:24 "Whosoever heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life and shall not come unto condemnation."  
 6:40 "that whosoever sees the Son and believes in Him, may have everlasting life."  
 8:24 "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."  
 9:41 "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say: We see, therefore your sin remaineth."  
 11:26 "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."



12:46 "Whosoever believeth in Me shall not abide in darkness."

I John 1:9 "He is faithful and just to remit (aphei) us our sins."

How did the other apostles understand the Mission and Remission text? Peter put the mission text into practice by going to Caesarea and by preaching to a large group of unbaptized people, saying: "Whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) shall receive the remission of sins (aphesin hamartion; remissionem peccatorum)" (*Acts 10:43*). After this sermon the believers were baptized (*Acts 10:48*; cf. *Acts 2:38-41*). Peter must have thought that the remission text referred to Baptism, for none of his audience was fit to receive the Sacrament of Penance, even if it had existed. The apostle Paul preached to the unbaptized of Antioch, saying: "Through this man (Christ) is preached unto you the remission of sins (aphesis hamartion; remissio peccatorum); and by Him all that believe are justified" (*Acts 13:38-39*). Paul had the same message for pagan Rome: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart . . . thou shalt be saved" (*Rom. 10:9*).

One Protestant minister has already accused this writer of what he called the new heresy of Duvicanism: holding that John 20:23 refers to Baptism, a view opposed by all Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant bodies of today. This work does not attempt to introduce new doctrines, but merely attempts to give the history of the old doctrines. We briefly examine the Scriptures, after which we give the interpretations of the Fathers and theologians of the Middle Ages. Anyone who disagrees with this work is welcome to write a better work on the history of dogma.

#### INTERPRETATION OF JOHN 20:23 BY THE FATHERS

In the days of the Fathers the pagan priests claimed the

power of remitting sins and of imposing penances or satisfactions. The Fathers, when instructing converts from paganism, had to explain to their converts that in the Christian religion only God can remit our sins. Besides quoting the Bible as proof, they appealed to reason by comparing an offense against God with a slave stepping on the toes of his master, in which case only the master can accept the apology of the offender. When the fourth century forced millions of pagans to embrace Christianity and allowed hundreds of pagan priests to become ministers of the Christian religion, the heresy of the remission of post-baptismal sins by the clergy spread everywhere, but the Fathers fought it. By the ninth century, when the catechumenate and adult baptism had been abolished, and when a new penitential system had been introduced, the custom of confessing post-baptismal sins to a priest gradually developed. After centuries of controversy the Roman Church finally granted her priests the power to remit sins. Because the modern Church of Rome has adopted the ancient pagan practice of remitting sins, the modern reader of the Fathers may receive the wrong impression that the Fathers were fighting the pope of Rome. This is not the case at all. The greatest of the Italian and African Fathers like St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, etc., agreed with Pope Leo the Great in matters of Baptism and the remission of sins.

SAINT IRENAEUS (200 A.D.), Bishop of Lyons, France, writes: "The Lord God . . . He remits our sins . . . For that reason He taught us to say in the Lord's Prayer: 'And remit unto us our debts' (*Matt. 6:12*), for He is our Father whose debtors we are and whose laws we have transgressed" (*Irenaeus, "Against Heresies", bk 5, chapt. 17; Migne, P.G. 7, 1170*).

SAINT CYPRIAN (d. 258), Bishop of Carthage, Africa, and the Seventh Council of Carthage (257) explained and

decreed: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them . . ." (John 20:23). In this text He shows that he alone can baptize and give remission of sins who has the Holy Spirit . . . The contagion of sins is not washed away in such a manner as dirt of the skin . . . It is evident that the devil is driven out in Baptism through the faith of the believer" (*Cyprian, Ep. 75: 11, 12, 16; Migne, P.L. 3, 1193, 1195, 1199*). "After this we also entreat for our sins, saying: 'And remit us our debts as we remit our debtors'" (*Cyprian, Treatise 4: "On the Lord's Prayer", chapt. 22; Migne, P.L. 4, 552*). St. Cyprian and the African Councils had never heard of a Sacrament of Penance for post-baptismal sins. Consequently they took it for granted that the Remission text referred to Baptism. You may disagree with St. Cyprian and the African councils, but the fact remains that the greatest "genius" and expert of the 3rd century on the subject of Baptism disagreed with you.

SAINT HILARY (d. 368), Bishop of Poitiers, France, explains Christ's words: "Son, be of good cheer: thy sins are remitted unto thee" (Matt. 9:2). And it was remitted unto him what the Law could not do, for justification . . . is by faith alone . . . For truly no one can forgive sins, but God alone" (*Hilarius Pict., Comment. on Matthew; Migne, P.L. 9, 961*).

SAINT AMBROSE (d. 397), Catholic Bishop of Milan, Italy, is the author of a book "On Repentance" (*De Poenitentia*) and explains the Remission text: "Whosoever has received the Holy Spirit has also received the power of remitting and of retaining sin, for thus it is written: 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted, whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained' (John 20:23). Therefore, whosoever has not received the power to remit sins, has neither received the Holy Spirit" (*Ambrose, "On Repentance" bk 1, chapt. 2; Migne, P.L. 16, 488-489*).

"Receive ye the Holy Spirit . . ." The Spirit therefore remits sin, as it is written: 'Who can remit sins except God alone' (Mark 2:7)" (*Ambrose, "On the Holy Spirit", bk 3, chapt. 18; Migne, P.L. 16, 842-843*). "Sin is not remitted except by tears and repentance. Neither an Angel nor an Archangel can remit sin, but only the Lord Himself who alone can say: 'I am with you'" (*Ambrose, "To Emperor Theodosius", Ep. 51, chapt. 11; Migne, P.L. 16, 1162*).

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (d. 407), Patriarch of Constantinople, the greatest of the Fathers and the author of a book "On Repentance (*Metanoia*)" seems to attack contemporary quacks who claimed to be able to cure post-baptismal sin: "Be thou also careful, Brother, . . . that thou doth not seek refuge with human beings, that thou doth not seek help from a mortal; but bypass them all and turn thyself with thy mind to the Physician of souls. For HE ALONE can supply the medicine for the heart who created our hearts separately and who understandeth all our deeds (Ps. 33:15) . . . As we know these things, Beloved, let us seek refuge with GOD ALONE . . . for He is ready to receive us without a (human) mediator (*sine intercessore*), He grants our petition without a price and without a stipend (*sine pecuniis, sine sumptibus*): all that is needed is to cry out with the heart alone (*sufficit solo corde clamare*) and to offer our tears" (*Chrysostom, "On Repentance", Hom. 4:4; Migne, P.G. 49, 304*).

To further illustrate his point, Chrysostom refers to the repenting thief on the cross: "And the Saviour saith: 'Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise' (Luke 23:41). He did not say: 'I loose thee by means of penance and satisfaction', but He leads him into Paradise as one made RIGHTEOUS . . . In such a manner does He destroy sin, that not the slightest trace of them is left" (*Chrysostom, "On Repentance", Hom. 8:2; Migne, P.G. 49, 339*). "Are you ashamed to confess



your sins? Tell them daily in prayer. Do I say that you must reveal them to a fellow-slave (fellow sinner), who may accuse you to the pietists? Tell them to God who heals them. Will He not know them through you? . . . Tell them, and shed your tears. Your sins are written in the Book, but your tears are as sponges" (*Chrysostom, Comment. on Psalm 50* [51:7]; *Migne, P.G.* 55, 581). This same verse was still quoted in the 12th century by Peter Abelard (*Migne, P.L.* 178, 1599).

In spite of the fact that Chrysostom's works occupy 18 huge volumes in Migne and include a complete commentary on every verse of every book of the Bible, Roman Catholic scholars soberly observe that "he seems to ignore private confession to a priest" (*C.E.* 8, 457). Indirectly, therefore, they admit that they themselves ignore the traditions of the early church.

SAINT JEROME (d. 420), the official Bible translator and Bible interpreter for the Church of Rome, differentiates between repentance (contrition of the heart) and public penance (excommunication of criminals) and explains that ministers of the N.T. can no more cure a sinner than the priests of the O.T. could cure a leper. Bishops and elders may only *declare* who is clean and who is unclean, who is bound and who absolved from the bond of sin. "'And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth . . .'" (Matt. 16:19). This passage the bishops and elders have misinterpreted and have assumed the arrogance of the Pharisees by thinking that they can either condemn the innocent or release the guilty; but in the eyes of God not the sentence of the bishop but the life of the sinner is considered" (*Jerome, Comment. on Matt. 16: 19; bk 3, chapt. 16, verse 19; Migne, P.L.* 26, 122). For more than a thousand years Roman theologians followed Jerome in making the distinction between "quoad ecclesiam"

and "quoad Deum": the church (man) may bind a member with the bond of excommunication (penance), but God alone deals with repentance and remission of sins. In his teachings on Baptism, Jerome also contributed the remission of sins to the Holy Spirit: "How can a soul be purged from its former stains, which has not the Holy Spirit? For the water does not wash the soul, but it is first washed by the Spirit (neque enim aqua lavat animam, sed prius lavatur a Spiritu)" (*Migne, P.L.* 23, 169).

SAINT AUGUSTINE (d. 430), bishop and the greatest of the Western Fathers, explains the remission text and the text of the keys as follows: "'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained'" (John 20:23). The love of the Church [the believers], which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, DISCHARGES the sins of all who are partakers therein, but RETAINS the sins of those who have no participation in it. Therefore it is that after the saying: 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit', He immediately added this phrase about the remission and retention of sins" (*Augustine, Comment. on John 20:23; Migne, P.L.* 35, 1958). "THE KEYS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH (Matt. 16:19). He has given, therefore, these keys to His church [the believers], that 'whatsoever it should loose on earth might be loosed in heaven, and whatever it should bind on earth might be bound in heaven' (Matt. 16:9). This means that whosoever [quisquis: anyone] in His church does not believe that his sins are remitted, they are not remitted unto him; but whosoever should believe and should repent and turn away from his sins, the same, being established in the bosom of the Church itself, shall be healed by his very FAITH AND REPENTANCE. For whosoever does not believe that his sins can be pardoned, becomes worse by the despair that there is nothing better for him than to remain evil, since he has no faith in



the fruits of his own conversion" (*Augustine, "On Christian Doctrine", bk 1, chapt. 18; Migne, P.L. 34, 25*).

These are not texts taken out of their contexts, but the basic teachings of Augustine on the subject. He also explained the phrase, "the remission of sins", mentioned in the Apostles' Creed and gave it the same interpretation as the phrase "remit us our debts" in the Lord's Prayer (*Migne, P.L. 40, 193*). As we will further see, he preached an entire sermon on "The remission of sins" and condemns those heretics who, influenced by paganism, teach that they have the power of remitting sins (*Migne, P.L. 38, 600*). Augustine does not say a word about auricular confessions, papal indulgences, propitiatory Masses, sacerdotal powers of remitting sins or the Sacrament of Penance. Because throughout the centuries St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom have been considered the pillars of the church, Rome selected their statues as supports of the papal throne, yet they were totally unfamiliar with Roman Catholic teachings. Some modern authors have expressed surprise about the ignorance of St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine. They ought to ask whether they themselves ever wrote a commentary on the entire Bible?

SAINT LEO THE GREAT (d. 461), Pope of Rome, explained the text of the keys (binding and loosing) as pertaining to the sinner's confession of faith, not to his confession of sin: "This confession (of faith) shall not be conquered by the gates of Hell, the fetters of death shall not bind it, for this voice is the voice of life. And even as it lifts into Heaven those who confess it, so it casts into Hell those who reject it. For this reason it was said to the most Blessed Peter: 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven . . . ' (Matt. 16:19)" (*Migne, P.L. 54, 150-151*). "A mighty fortress is a sound faith, a true faith . . . without

faith it is impossible to please God, and without it nothing is holy, nothing is pure, nothing alive, for 'the just shall live by faith' (Rom. 1:17)" (*Migne, P.L. 54, 207*). "This faith conquers the Devil and loosens the fetters of the captives. It lifts us from this earth and plants us in Heaven, and 'the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it (our faith)' (Matt. 16:18)" (*Migne, P.L. 54, 144-146*).

SAINT BEDE (8th cent.), the 'Venerable' British interpreter of the Bible, explains the remission text as follows: "Whose sins ye shall remit", He said, 'they are remitted unto them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained' (John 20:23). The love of the Church, which by the Holy Spirit is diffused into our hearts, REMOVES the sins of the members. Of those who are not her members, the sins REMAIN. Therefore, immediately after He said: 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit', He begins to speak of the remission of sins" (*Bede, Commentary on John 20:23; Migne, P.L. 92, 921*). We see, therefore, that the great St. Bede knows nothing about sacerdotal powers of remitting sins in a Sacrament of Penance. During the first penitential system (the system of the Fathers) no one except heretics taught that the remission text referred to a sacrament for post-baptismal sins.

If Pope Callistus (3rd cent.), had known of a Sacrament for post-baptismal sins, he would not have attempted to introduce a custom of Second and Repeated Baptisms for those who had lapsed back into mortal sins after their first Baptism (*Migne, P.G. 16, III, 3388*). To stamp out this 'papal' heresy the Ecumenical Councils interpreted the remission text of the Apostles' Creed ("I believe . . . in the remission of sins") as meaning: "I confess to believe in ONE BAPTISM unto the remission of sins"; Confiteor unum Baptisma in remissionem peccatorum (Nicene Creed of the Mass). In all their hundreds of canons the Ecumenical Councils failed to ex-



plain that Christ had instituted a special sacrament for the lapsed.

We have seen in an earlier chapter that the remission text was sneaked into the rite of priestly ordination at the end of the 13th century. When the Reformers attacked the Roman interpretation, Rome defined dogmatically that the words of John 20:23 refer to the priestly power of remitting sins in the Sacrament of Penance, "as the Catholic Church has ALWAYS, from the first, understood them" (*Council of Trent, 1551, Session 14; Mansi 33, 95*). Every student of patrology and of the councils knows that this statement by the council is a deliberate falsehood.

#### FORM OF ABSOLUTION

In the confession box the modern priest does not say: *Ab-solvo te* (I absolve thee), but he seems to emphasize his divine powers by saying: "Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis", It is I who forgive you your sins." Before the 13th century the pronoun "I" was never used in absolution forms of the Christian church, but seems to have been used in the pagan religions of Europe and Africa. The Catholic Encyclopedia remarks: "our modern declarative form of absolution in the West is probably of Anglo-Saxon origin" (*C.E. 1, 509*). Rome, therefore, seems to admit that her absolution form is neither biblical, nor apostolic, nor patristic.

During the first penitential system (200-800 A.D.) there existed no ritualistic form of absolution. The only penance in existence was life-long excommunication for the three mortal sins of murder, idolatry and adultery. All other sins were venial, for which no penances were imposed. Hence, bishops did not impose penances for theft, perjury, etc., and consequently could not absolve these sins. The three mortal sins had to be public crimes (without confession) and their bond of excommunication could not be absolved except at

the hour of death.

The pagans seem to have used a declarative absolution form for the remission of sin, as is still apparent from certain remarks by the Fathers of the church. When third-century Rome was so overwhelmed by the sin of adultery that only few were allowed to stay in the church, Pope Callistus tried to save his parish by declaring adultery a venial sin (when his fellow-bishops denounced him, he kept adultery as a mortal sin, but allowed a second Baptism for adulterers). Bishop Tertullian of Africa immediately compared Callistus with the pagan Pontiff of Rome and with sarcasm he makes him say: "Ego dimitto moechia . . . It is I who remit the sin of adultery" (*Tertullian, "On Modesty", chapt. 1, Migne, P.L. 2, 1032*). Tertullian most likely imitated the pagan form of absolution as used in his day, quite different from the biblical "nos dimittimus" (*Matt. 6:12*).

St. Ambrose (d. 397), Bishop of Milan, probably referred to the pagan penances which, like court proceedings, required accusers, confessions, defense lawyers, penalties and satisfactions, when he speaks of Peter's denial of Christ and his repentance: "I do not find what he (Peter) said, but I find that he wept; I read about his tears, but I do not read about his satisfaction; for, what cannot be defended, still can be forgiven" (*Ambrose, Comment. on Luke 22:62; Migne, P.L. 15, 1918*).

St. John Chrysostom (d. 407), Patriarch of Constantinople, who did not believe in "confession to a priest", probably referred to the pagan absolution when he described the repenting thief on the cross: "And the Saviour saith: 'Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise' (Luke 23:41). He did not say: 'I loose thee by means of punishment and satisfaction', but He leads him into Paradise as one made righteous" (*Migne, P.G. 49, 339*).

St. Augustine (d. 430), Bishop of Hippo, Africa, preached



an entire sermon on the "Remission of sins" and condemned the heretical sect of Donatists for using the pagan absolution form: *Ego dimitto*. The text of Augustine's sermon was taken from Luke 7:37-50 where Christ remitted the sins of a public woman and which the Pharisee thought to be blasphemy: "Beloved I will deliver to you a sermon on the remission of sins . . . There was shown then a better understanding in the Jews (Pharisee) than in the Heretics (Donatists). What did the Jews say? 'Who is this that remitteth sins also? Does any human being dare to usurp this to himself?' What, on the other hand, does the Heretic say? 'It is I who remit . . . ' (Then Augustine puts the following words in Christ's mouth:) 'I gave remission of sins through faith. But you, O Heretic, mere man as you are, you dare to say: 'Come, woman, I will make thee whole', whereas I said: 'Go, woman, THY FAITH has made thee whole'. (Then Augustine continues:) They (the heretics) answer, as the Apostle says: 'not knowing either what they say or whereof they affirm' (I Tim. 1:7). They answer and say: If men do not remit sins, then it is not true what Christ said: 'Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven' (Matt. 16:19). But you (heretic) do not know why this is said and in what meaning this is said. The Lord was about to give to men the Holy Spirit . . . 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit', and when He had said: 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit', He immediately added: 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted them' (John 20:23), that is, the Spirit remits them, not you! Now the Spirit is God. Therefore God remits, not you!" (*Augustine, Sermon 99, chapt. 8; Migne, P.L. 38, 600*).

St. Augustine, therefore, denied that Matthew 16:19 and John 20:23 refer to sacerdotal powers of remitting sins. But the followers of the heretical and excommunicated Bishop Donatus (3rd & 4th cent.) adopted the pagan practice

of remitting sins. Every word St. Augustine said against the heretical Donatists applies till the last detail to the Roman Church of today. If a Protestant minister were to memorize Augustine's sermon and to preach it over the radio or on television, the stations would cut him off from the air, thinking that he was vilifying Roman Catholic doctrine, while in reality he would be quoting a Saint whose statue supports the throne of the Pope.

The Anglo-Saxon Penitential System, which Rome adopted in the 9th century, introduced the ritualistic forms of absolution. This system was introduced after the Catechuminate and Adult Baptism had been abolished. It increased the number of sins which could be publicly punished, but it changed the life-long penances of excommunication into public penances of one to twelve years. It also allowed voluntary confessions of non-public sins and forty day penances during Lent (quarantines) for those who wished to receive Communion at Easter. These new Lenten confessions and Lenten penances, which in the 13th century became obligatory and sacramental, introduced the system of absolving penances at times other than the hour of death. Had the church remained a communion of saints instead of a congregation for saints and sinners alike, the Sacrament of Penance would never have come into existence.

The oldest "Roman Penitential" (9th cent.) gives us the absolution form as prescribed at Rome from 850 to 1054 A.D. According to this absolution God the Father remits the sins through Jesus Christ. The pronoun used is "We", that is, the bishop, elders and deacons. They did not *remit* sins, they did not even declare that *God* had remitted their sins, but they merely prayed that God *may* remit the sins of their fellow men. In the Middle Ages the absolution was called "the imposition of hands" (*manus impositio*), and it was usually pronounced on Holy Thursday over all penitents *en*



*masse*, like a benediction of today. The text used was as follows:

"Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, Thou who through Thy Son, Jesus, our Lord, hast deigned to heal our wounds, we, thy humble priests beg and beseech Thee, that Thou wilt deign to incline the ear of Thy mercy to our prayers and that Thou mayest remit all the offenses and that Thou mayest forgive all the sins of this thy servant . . . (Domine Sancte Pater . . . remittasque omnia crimina et peccata universa condones, desque huic famulo tuo)" (*Migne, P.L. 105, 697*).

After the final schism (1054), when Rome began to teach that the petrine text (Matt. 16:18) refers exclusively to Rome; when St. Peter was made the 'janitor' or doorkeeper of heaven; when every family had one of the boys baptized as Peter (Peter Abelard, Peter Lombard, Peter Damian, etc.); when Pope Hildebrand began to bind and loose kings in the name of St. Peter: "O Blessed Peter . . . by thy power and authority I depose King Henry" (*Migne, P.L. 148, 74*); when Peter was elevated nearly to the rank of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church began to "absolve in the name of St. Peter". We must remember, however, that in the Middle Ages the verb "to absolve" referred to the pardon from ecclesiastical penalties, while the verb "to remit" referred to the pardon from the sins. After the introduction of obligatory confessions (1215), God was still said to remit the sins, but the priest absolved from penances, censures and excommunication in as far as he had jurisdiction to do so. Eventually, but slowly, the verb *absolve* became synonymous with *remit*, and priests were said to remit sins.

The Hereford Pontifical, which was used in England during the 13th and 14th centuries and which can be called, therefore, a "Roman Catholic" ritual, already shows signs of confusion between absolving and remitting. This Pontifical,

which does not have the remission text for the ordination of priests, contains the following absolution: "We absolve thee in the stead of Blessed Peter, the prince of apostles, to whom the Lord has given the power of binding and loosing, in as far as the accusation pertains to you and (the power of) remission is ours . . . May Almighty God grant thee life and salvation and remission of all thy sins" (*Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 39, p. 153*). The pronoun "We" indicates that the absolution was still public; the subjunctive mood "may" indicates that the priests are merely praying for remission and are lacking the absolute power of remitting sins.

The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892) contains the same absolution: "We absolve thee in the stead of Blessed Peter" and its caption for the absolution reads: "Absolution of the penitents on Holy Thursday" (*Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 51, p. 29*).

Notwithstanding the falsified versions of medieval Summas, the priests in the days of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure asked God to remit the sins of the penitents. St. Alexander of Hales in 1245 introduced the singular form "I absolve" for private absolutions, which was another step closer to the pagan form "Ego dimitto", but Alexander still taught that God remits the sins and the priest absolves the pardoned sinner from ecclesiastical penalties.

Catholic scholars, though forced to be vague, admit that before the Roman Catholic era (1054) the absolution was merely a prayer and lacked the *ex opere operato* efficacy of a sacrament. They further admit that the modern form of absolution is not older than the 15th century, being first approved by the Council of Florence in 1439. "Up to the twelfth century the deprecatory form was employed both in the East and the West" (*C.E. 1, 65*). "In the early Church these forms certainly varied (Duchesne). Surely all the Sacramentaries assert that the form was deprecatory, and

it is only in the eleventh century that we find a tendency to pass to indicative and personal formulae (Duchesne). . . . It was not until the scholastic doctrine of 'matter and form' in the Sacraments reached its full development that the formula of absolution became fixed as we have it at present. . . . The form in use in the Roman Church today has not been changed since long before the Council of Florence" (*C.E.* 1, 64).

The Council of Florence (1439) in defining the matter and the form of each sacrament, ruled that the form of the Sacrament of Penance consisted of the priestly words of absolution: "Ego te absolvo". *Absolving* rather than *remitting* became the form of this sacrament, and the singular pronoun was substituted for the plural when the Public Penitential system gradually came to an end. "Absolvo" is a very late form for the older "absolvimus". The noun "Ego" (for the older "nos") loses its meaning unless the priestly power of absolving is contrasted with God's power of remitting.

To add to the confusion, the Ritual of 1570 prescribed for all of Western Europe three forms of absolution amalgamated into one. In order to give its new absolution a medieval appearance, two older forms of absolution precede the new one, and the plural forms of the Middle Ages have been changed into the singular:

"Indulgentiam, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum tuorum tribuat tibi omnipotens et misericors Dominus. Amen. Dominus noster Jesus Christus te absolvat, et ego auctoritate ipsius te absolvo ab omni vinculo excommunicationis, suspensionis et interdicti, in quantum possum et tu indiges. Deinde ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis, in nomine Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen" (*Rituale Romanum*, Rome, 1926, p. 112). "May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant thee the pardon, absolution and remission of thy sins. Amen. May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee [from thy sins]

and by His authority I absolve thee from every bond of excommunication, suspension and interdict, in as far as I am able and thou art in need of it. And now, it is I who absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

First God the Father is asked to remit the sins, then Christ is asked to do it, and finally (deinde) the priest does it himself. The only improvement over the Middle Ages is the fact that the new formula omits "St. Peter".

The Reformers did not wish to abolish the biblical way of confessing sins, but they objected to detailed, obligatory, auricular confessions to a priest. They objected to man-imposed punishment for sin, and even denied that any human being ever received the power of remitting sins.

Contrary to what one might expect, Martin Luther did not abolish the traditional absolution of sin, but preserved both a public and private absolution for those German peasants who had been indoctrinated in Roman practices and whose faith might be strengthened if their church officially declared that their sins had been forgiven. Before the Lutheran Communion service the pastor as the minister of the Gospel says: "I declare unto you who do truly repent the entire forgiveness of all your sins" (*Lutheran Hymnal*). Contrary to the Roman Catholic Church which has open Communion of which any stranger and tourist can partake, the Lutherans hold closed Communion services for which one must register on a previous day. If a Lutheran's conscience is bothered by a particular sin, he is advised to confess it to the pastor at the time of registration. The pastor then pronounces the following private absolution: "Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office . . . and in the stead and by the command of my Lord, Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (*Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis,



*Mo., Concordia, 1941; p. 16 & 48*). This absolution form is not older than the 15th century, but since all Protestants deny that John 20:23 refers to the remission of sins through Baptism, the Lutherans continue to teach that the remission text refers to the pastoral power of declaring and even of actually forgiving the sins of his fellow men. Yet in spite of this interpretation, confession to a Lutheran pastor is not essential or obligatory. Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism teaches: "Must a Christian privately confess his sins before a pastor? A Christian should not be forced to make a private confession before the pastor" (*Question 292; St. Louis, Mo., Concordia, 1943; p. 192*). The Lutheran Witness, a Missouri Synod Lutheran publication, explains: "Though it is not necessary to confess a sin to a pastor, such confession is salutary" (*Lutheran Witness, May 2, 1961, p. 205*).

The Greek Orthodox priest, who neither claims the power of remitting sins, nor imposes a fixed penalty on the sinner, uses the deprecatory form of absolution: "You do not confess to me, but to God who is present here . . . May this same God, through me a sinner, forgive you all, now and for ever". The Catholic Encyclopedia comments: "They have no confessionals . . . Penance (metanoia) is administered rarely" (*C.E. 4, 320*). The Council of Trent declared the Eastern absolution invalid.

## TWENTY-THREE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE THIRD PENITENTIAL SYSTEM

### First Penitential System:

1. During the first 8 centuries.
2. For the lapsed only, who may attend the services but must leave after the sermon.
3. Not a sacrament.
4. No confession.

### Sacrament of Penance of today:

1. Since the last 8 centuries.
2. For the lapsed and the faithful alike.
3. A means of grace.
4. Secret confessions with their "seal".

5. Punishment for public crimes.
6. Penance is public.
7. For three crimes only.
8. A matter of church discipline.
9. A life-time penance.
10. Penance can be performed only once.
11. It involves excommunication.
12. It excludes the penitent from Holy Communion and from Christian fellowship for life.
13. Reconciliation takes place at the hour of death, that is, after penance has been fulfilled.
14. It reconciles the penitent with the faithful (church).
15. It was called "Penance" because punishment was the only external means of reconciliation.
16. It was instituted by the Church.
17. Rome abolished it in the ninth century.
18. The existence of the public penances of the catechuminate is proof that the early church was a communion of saints, a fellowship of the faithful and the steadfast only.
19. Public Penance of the catechuminate was for the laity only. The clergy was not admitted, that is, lapsed priests were excommunicated for life and all eternity.
20. No priest was ever allowed to
5. Penance for privately confessed sins.
6. Penance is secret.
7. For all sins, mortal and venial.
8. A matter of salvation.
9. Short penances.
10. Confessions and penances can be repeated yearly, even daily.
11. No excommunication involved.
12. It does not deprive the sinner from the sacraments, but admits him to them.
13. Reconciliation takes place immediately after absolution, before the penance has started.
14. It reconciles the sinner with God.
15. It is now commonly called "Confession" because the confessing of sins has become the chief means of forgiveness.
16. It is said to have been instituted by Christ.
17. It may not and cannot be abolished.
18. The Sacrament of Penance with its secret confessions implies that the greatest sinners can remain church members of good standing.
19. The Sacrament of Penance is a means of grace for clergy and laity alike.
20. Any priest can absolve the

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>reconcile a mortal sinner and admit him to daily Communion.</p> <p>21. The reconciliation of the public penitent at the hour of death was merely the lifting of the ban of excommunication in order to restore his membership in the church.</p> <p>22. In absence of a bishop, a deacon or even a layman of the church could restore the dying penitent to the bosom of the church.</p> <p>23. Excommunication for the three mortal sins was the only form of penance in existence.</p> | <p>mortal sinner and admit him to the sacraments.</p> <p>21. The absolving of the modern penitent is a remitting of sins. At the hour of death a priest may also absolve the sinner from the bond of excommunication.</p> <p>22. Remission of sins or the last sacraments can only be administered by a priest who received the power of remitting sins in the Sacrament of Holy Orders.</p> <p>23. Excommunications of the laity and censures of the clergy are ecclesiastical penalties distinct from the Sacrament of Penance.</p> |
|---|---|

As the two systems have hardly anything in common except the name "Penance", one can imagine what difficulties honest Catholic theologians have in proving from the Fathers that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance. On the other hand one can also imagine what opportunities dishonest authors have in proving that "Penance" existed from the earliest centuries on.

### ONE PENANCE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

'Pope' Clement (c. 100) in his second letter to the Corinthians writes: "How can we hope to enter into the Kingdom of God, except we keep our baptism holy and undefiled" (*Migne, P.G. 1, 338*). This Roman presbyter had never heard yet of a catechumenate which allowed a second or post-baptismal repentance for mortal sinners. Pope Callistus (d. 223) knew the catechumenate, because he attempted to

reduce the number of mortal sins to two and to declare adultery a mere venial sin. Callistus, however, had never heard of a special sacrament for post-baptismal sins, because "during his reign Repeated Baptism was for the first time attempted" (*Migne, P.G. 16, III, 3388*).

Hermas, the brother of Pope Pius (d. 167), is the first to refer to the catechumenate, but his work has been mutilated and cannot be used to establish the date of origin of a second repentance. He writes: "If anyone after this great and holy calling (Baptism; Heb. 10:23 & 26) shall be tempted by the devil and shall sin, he has one repentance. But if he shall often sin and repent, it shall not profit such a one" (*Hermas; Migne, P.G. 2, 830*). Here the brother of a pope supposedly introduces the catechumenate, but he declares the modern sacrament of Penance to be null and void.

St. Clement of Alexandria (d. 220) believed in a "holy" church and speaks of "the first and only repentance of sins (*prima et unica peccatorum paenitentia*)" while he warns: "He who has received the remission of sins, is not permitted to sin again" (*Migne, P.G. 8, 994*). St. Ambrose (d. 397), Bishop of Milan, objected to repeated penances and repeated baptisms, for he writes: "As there is only one Baptism, so there is only one repentance (*sicut unum baptisma, ita una paenitentia*)" (*Ambrose, On Repentance, bk 2, chapt. 10; Migne, P.L. 16, 520*).

The catechumenate with its one post-baptismal penance might be of African (Latin) origin. It was fully enforced by Tertullian (d. 230), Origen (d. 254), Cyprian (d. 258), Apostolic Constitutions (4th cent.), Pope Siricius (d. 399), Jerome (d. 420), Augustine (d. 430), Pope Leo (d. 461), etc.

Catholic scholars fully admit that the early church did not believe in repeated penances. The Catholic Encyclopedia comments: "It had been a time-honoured law in the church that the three capital crimes: apostasy, murder and adultery,



were to be atoned by an accurately determined penance, which was public . . . A further evidence of the severity with which Public Penance, and especially its solemn form, was administered is the fact that it could be performed only once" (*C.E.* 6, 605-606).

### ONE PENANCE, NOT ONE REPENTANCE

It is true that many 5th century Christians began to confuse penance with repentance, and that the word *paenitentia* (sorrow, repentance) soon received the meaning of discipline, punishment. St. Augustine explained that the church grants only one penance, but God is capable of forgiving any repentant sinner any time: "It has been cautiously and soundly provided that the performing of this very humble penance can be granted in the church only once. Yet who will dare to say to God: Why does Thou once more spare this man who after his first penance has bound himself again in the fetters of sin?" (*Migne, P.L.* 33, 656). St. Jerome, influenced by the East (Chrysostom), also taught at Rome that the church allows only one penance, but God may reconcile a sinner by repeated repentance (*Migne, P.L.* 33, 656).

In the fifth century we find the Council ad Quercum (430) condemning second penances for habitual mortal sinners. In the sixth century the Third Council of Toledo (589) found it necessary to condemn "some churches in Spain" for granting a second penance, and it warns them not to depart from "the severity of the canons of old" (*canon 11; Mansi* 9, 995). What the Council of Trent (16th cent.) claimed to be of apostolic origin, was still unknown or forbidden by canon law in the days of Pope Gregory the Great.

### NO PENANCE FOR THE CLERGY

Pope Siricius (d. 399) decreed by canon law: "No clergyman is ever allowed to do penance (*Clerico nullo conceditur*

*poenitentiam agere*") (*Siricius, Epist. & Decrees, canon 14; Migne, P.L.* 13, 1145).

Pope Leo the Great (d. 461) decreed: "It is contrary to the custom of the Church that they who have been dedicated to the dignity of the Presbyterate or the rank of the Deaconate, should receive the remedy of Penance" (*Migne, P.L.* 54, 1203).

These popes did not intend to withhold God's grace from the clergy, but they refused them a man-made remedy (penance). Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604) attempted to solve the problem by reducing all fallen clergy to the status of the laity, after which he allowed them one penance as laymen. He warned the bishops, however, that a penitent ex-clergyman "must not and cannot in any way be restored to sacred orders (*ad sacrum ordinem non debere vel posse ullo modo revocari*)" (*Migne, P.L.* 77, 724). As a result of this new ruling, seventh-century Italy abounded with "ex-priests". The above mentioned epistle alone speaks of ex-presbyter Amandino, ex-presbyter Vitaliano, ex-presbyter Saturnino and ex-deacon and ex-abbot Jobino.

### PRIESTS FORBIDDEN TO RECONCILE ANYONE TO COMMUNION. IN DANGER OF DEATH ANYONE MAY RECONCILE THE PENITENT.

The Council of Carthage in 419 decreed: "Let no Presbyter . . . reconcile anyone to Communion" (*canon 6; Mansi* 4, 424). What is now considered a common sacrament and a common priestly duty, was then a heresy and sinful act forbidden by canon law. If the penitent was in danger of death and his pastor was absent, even a layman's absolution was valid (*C.E.* 11, 623-624). Both the inability of the priest and the capability of the layman to restore a sinner to Communion are proofs that the Penitential System of the early church was not sacramental.

During the Second Penitential System, when repeated penances were introduced, the bishop determined the length of penance for each sin and allowed the Presbyters to impose these penances on the laity if they followed his pontifical rules. After these penances had been fulfilled, the Presbyter was allowed to admit the penitent to fellowship and communion. The ninth-century British Penitential, attributed to Archbishop Theodore, decreed: "The Deacon is not allowed to impose penance on a layman", but the ninth-century Roman Penitential explains: "If, however, the need arises, and there is no Presbyter present, a Deacon may admit the penitent to satisfaction or Holy Communion" (*Migne, P.L. 105, 695*).

In the 13th century, when confession of sins to a priest had been made obligatory (1215) and when Penance began to be listed among the Sacraments, the great Alanus de Insulis (Alain) wrote a Summa and a Penitential wherein he expounds the new doctrine of auricular confession. He writes: "If, however, the priest is absent, confession is to be made to a neighbor or fellowman; but the priest ought to be sought (*requirendus est*) earnestly. For Augustine writes: 'The power of confession is so great, that, when there is no priest, one should confess to a layman'" (*Penitential of Alain; Migne, P.L. 210, 302*). The fact that St. Augustine never said this and that the Roman Catholic Church falsified the writings of the early saints in order to introduce a new doctrine (1215), has nothing to do with our subject here. The fact remains that in the days of Pope Innocent III a great scholastic was still unfamiliar with the remission text of priestly ordination, and defends auricular confession by indirectly referring to James: "Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another" (*James 5:16*). Though Alanus attacked the Waldenses for teaching that a sinful priest has no power of binding and loosing his fellowmen,

he practically agrees with the Waldenses that the confession to a layman is as efficacious as that to a priest.

### THE FIRST PENITENTIAL SYSTEM AND THE FATHERS

Besides the patristic texts we have already quoted on the subject, we will conclude the history of the first penitential system with a few more quotations of the Fathers. Space does not permit more chapter divisions and lengthy comments. By now the reader will be able to observe the various distinctions involved.

Roman theologians who by profession are bound to prove that auricular confession existed from the time of Christ, invariably start out by quoting Pope Clement (c. 100): "Let us, therefore, as many as have transgressed . . . beg God's forgiveness . . . For, it is seemly for a man to confess wherein he has transgressed." They do not dare to finish the sentence: "God is not in need of anything, nor does He demand anything of us, except that we confess our sins to Him" (*Migne, P.G. 1, 315*). This 'pope' actually taught the very opposite of what Rome is trying to put in his mouth. He said that God does not demand penances, nor does He demand confessions to priests; His only demand is that we confess our sins to Him.

Saint Irenaeus (200), Bishop of Lyons, writes: "Rightly, therefore, saith His Word to the man: 'Thy sins are remitted unto thee' (Matt. 9:2), for the same person is He against whom we have sinned in the first place and who grants us the remission of sins in the end . . . For how are our sins truly remitted, unless He Himself against whom we have sinned, grants the remission" (*Migne, P.G. 7, 1170*).

Bishop Tertullian (d. 230), like Peter Abelard (12th cent.), taught that God alone remits sins, that the apostles never received the power of remitting sins, and, even if the apostles



had received divine powers, such powers were not inherited by their successors. When Pope Callistus attempted to reduce adultery to the status of a venial or pardonable sin, he was immediately attacked by Bishop Hippolytus and Bishop Tertullian. Both maintained that no bishop on earth can pardon the sin of adultery. Tertullian dedicated an entire book to the subject: "On Modesty". Chapter 21 of this book explains in detail the difference between ecclesiastical discipline and the divine power of remitting sins. The entire chapter is the interpretation of the "Power of the Keys" (see Matt. 16:19):

"For who was able to remit sins? This is God's prerogative alone (*Hoc solius Ipsius est*), for 'who remits sins but God alone' (*Mark 2:7*); and who but He alone can remit capital crimes such as have been committed against Himself . . . Therefore, even if it were agreed that the blessed apostles had granted such remissions, the pardon of such would have to come from God, not from man. It might have been fit for them (the apostles) to have done so, not in the exercise of discipline, but of power, for they also raised the dead, a power which belongs to God alone. . . . If, because of what the Lord said to Peter: 'Upon this Rock I will build my church', 'To thee I have given the keys of the heavenly kingdom', or 'Whatsoever thou shalt have bound or loosed on earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven', you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has been derived to you, that is, to every church akin to Peter, what sort of man are you, subverting and changing the manifest intention of the Lord (*evertans atque commutans manifestam Domini intentionem*)?" (*Tertullian, "On Modesty", chapt. 21; Migne, P.L. 2, 1078-1079*).

Tertullian, like all other Fathers, maintains that binding and loosing pertains only to church discipline, not to the divine power of remitting sins. He accuses Callistus of trying

to change biblical teachings. Tertullian won and Callistus lost the argument, because their successors, St. Cyprian and Pope Cornelius were friends and maintained the three capital crimes. For those who believe that Callistus spoke as a "pope", it is good to remember that Callistus still agreed that the two capital crimes of apostasy and murder should remain "mortal", i.e., unpardonable. Callistus merely sought to introduce the pagan system of remitting sin and ran into a wall of protest.

St. Cyprian (d. 258), Bishop of Africa, fought the same pagan heresies. He was not fighting Rome, but heretical sects which sought to introduce the priestly remission of sin: "*Nemo se fallat, nemo se decipiat, solus Dominus misereri potest . . . Let no one be misled, let no one deceive himself: the Lord alone can pardon. He alone can grant forgiveness of sins which have been committed against Himself, who bore our sins, who suffered for us, whom God delivered up for our sins. Man cannot be greater than God, nor can the servant remit or forgive by his pardon that which has been committed against the master by a major crime, lest to the person lapsed this be still added to his crime, if he is ignorant of what has been forewarned: 'Cursed be the man who trust in man' (Jer. 17:5)*" (*Cyprian, Treatise III: On the Lapsed, Art. 17; Migne, P.L. 4, 479*).

Rome thought that St. Cyprian was so wonderful that it called him a "genius" and a "pope", deserving a place in the Roman liturgy. Yet Cyprian attacks the same heresy with ever increasing force: "*Quantus arrogantiae tumor . . . What a height of arrogance, what a lack of humility and meekness, what a boasting of one's own ignorance, that anyone should either dare or think himself able to do what the Lord did not even grant to His apostles (quod nec apostolis concessit Dominus): that he should endeavor to separate the weed from the corn (Matt. 13:29)*" (*St. Cyprian to*



his friend, Pope Cornelius; see *Cornelius*, Ep. 10, chapt. 25; *Migne*, P.L. 4, 354).

"Superba est ista obstinatio . . . This is a proud obstinacy and a sacrilegious presumption which a depraved madness (*furor pravus*) assumes to himself. And while some are always assuming more power (*dominium*) than meek justice demands, they perish from the church (*de ecclesia pereunt*); and while they proudly (*insolenter*) extol themselves, blinded by their own pride (*tumore*), they lose the light of truth (*veritatis lumen amittunt*)" (*Cyprian*, Ep. 51, chapt. 3; *Migne*, P.L. 4, 354).

Though no clearer condemnation of the Roman Catholic Sacrament of Penance can be found anywhere, the Roman Catholic Ritual of today still says of St. Cyprian: "It would be superfluous to discuss his genius, because his writings are more brilliant than the sun" (*Breviarium Romanum*, Sept. 16). In Roman Catholic churches dedicated to St. Cyprian (e.g. Lakewood, Calif.), the priests constantly kiss the alleged relics of the African Saint and kneel before his statue, apparently ignorant of this married bishop's theology.

Origen (d. 254) of Alexandria, Egypt, is the first Father to write a systematic commentary on the entire Bible. This Greek Father explains the power of the keys the same way as his contemporary Latin colleagues: "Let us see in what sense it is said to Peter and to every peter (believer): 'I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 16:19). . . . Consider how great a power the Rock has . . . and how great a power every one has who says: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of God' (Matt. 16:18)" (*Origen*, *Comment. on Matthew*; *Migne*, P.G. 13, 1011-1014). "And if anyone who is not a peter (believer) and who does not possess the things here spoken of, imagines as a peter that he will so bind on earth that the things are bound in heaven, and will so loose on earth that the same are loosed in heaven,

he is puffed up, not understanding the meaning of the Scriptures, and being puffed up, he has fallen into the ruin of the devil" (*Origen*, *Comment. on Matthew*; *Migne*, P.G. 13, 1015). "It is ridiculous to say that he who is bound by the chains of his own sins . . . has such power of loosening, simply because he is called a 'bishop' (*propter hoc solum quoniam episcopus dicitur*)" (*Origen*, *Comment. on Matthew*, bk 12, chapt. 14).

St. Ambrose (d. 397), an Italian Bishop, writes: "There is no one without sin except God alone. So there is no one who remits sins except God alone" (*Migne*, P.L. 16, 842).

St. Augustine (d. 430), an African Bishop, warned his people not to trust in heretical absolution but to trust in God alone. In his sermon on the public woman (against the Donatists) he concludes: "So then, let every soul which is to be delivered from her many sins . . . believe with full assurance, approach the feet of the Lord . . . and confess by pouring out tears upon them . . . For she (every soul) will hear from the Lord with firm assurance: 'Woman, go in peace, thy faith hath made thee whole' (*Migne*, P.L. 38, 600). "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 16:19). It was not one man that received these keys, but the totality of the church, when it was said to him: I will give thee that which is given to all" (*Migne*, P.L. 38, 1349). "For Christ is the Rock and Peter represents the Christian people (*Christus Petra, Petrus populus christianus*)" (*Migne*, P.L. 38, 479). "Our very righteousness (*Ipsa quoque nostra iustitia*) . . . consists rather in the remission of sins (*peccatorum remissione*) than in the perfection of virtues (*perfectione virtutum*). A witness to this is the prayer of the whole City of God (the church) as it wanders on this earth and through all its members cries to God: 'Remit unto us our debts as we remit our debtors' (Matt. 6:12) . . . In this, then, consists the righteousness of man: (1) that he asks from



God Himself both the grace of good works (*gratia meritorum*), (2) and the pardon of his sins (*venia delictorum*), (3) and that he renders thanks (*gratiarum actio*) for all the blessings he has received" (*Augustine, City of God, bk 19, chapt. 27; Migne, P.L. 41, 657-658*).

Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604) did not preach remission of sins through priestly absolutions, but taught that sins are remitted through tears and love. He concludes his Books of Dialogues with: "Wherefore, while the time is given us, while our Judge bears with us, while He who examines our sins desires our conversion and amendment, let us mollify with tears the hardness of our heart, and let us with sincere charity love our neighbors" (*Migne, P.L. 77, 428-429*).

#### ANGLO-SAXON PENITENTIAL SYSTEM

The Second or Anglo-Saxon Penitential System originated in the seventh century on the freshly converted and monk-infested isles of Great Britain and Ireland. For some time it was a disciplinary system for monks only. Gradually it grew into a penitential system for monks, clergy and laity alike. British missionaries, like St. Boniface and St. Willibrord, introduced the system to Northern Europe. Southern Europe protested until it adopted the system in the 9th century. If this new system had been of divine institution, Italy and France would not have waited till the 9th century before adopting it. If the first system had been of divine institution, Rome could not have discarded it. The Catholic Encyclopedia repeatedly states: "the catechumenate gradually fell into disuse" (*C.E. 3, 431*), "the discipline of the catechumenate is gradually forgotten" (*C.E. 9, 792*), "public penance fell into disuse" (*C.E. 11, 632*), etc., as if admitting that the whole thing was a mistake and could be discarded like an old shoe.

The second system introduced oral confessions which

were obligatory for the monks, but remained voluntary for the laity until the 13th century (1215). From the 9th to the 15th century public penances were imposed for both public crimes and privately confessed sins. In the 12th century this penitential system began to be listed among the Sacraments, and its sacramental character was officially adopted by Italy and France in the 13th century (1274). By the 15th century public penance disappeared (except in Milan), and the councils of Florence (1439) and Trent (1545-1563) established the third and present penitential system which consists of private confessions and private penances only.

The first and second penitential systems had but few things in common. They both prescribed public penances; in both systems reconciliation took place after the entire penance had been fulfilled; both were non-sacramental up to the 12th century; both operated without the present system of confession boxes.

The Penitential system of the Catechumenate existed in the West from about 200 to 850 A.D., in some places extending into the 11th century. The Anglo-Saxon system started out as a penal system in monasteries which forced monks to accuse themselves whenever they had broken the monastic rules or divine commandments (7th to 9th cent.). It was adopted by Rome for clergy and laity in the 9th century; it was officially made a sacrament in the 13th century when oral confessions had been made obligatory; and it ceased to be a public penitential system in the 15th century.

##### *First system:*

1. Public punishment for three public crimes only: murder, idolatry, adultery.
2. Same penance for all three mortal sins.

##### *Second system:*

1. Public punishment for all sins, whether mortal or venial, whether publicly known or voluntarily confessed.
2. Penitential canons prescribing in detail the standardized punishment for each sin.

- ishment for each sin.
3. No reconciliation until death. 3. More mortal sins; shorter penances; repeated absolutions. Sins are absolved *en masse* by bishops and priests after the penance has been fulfilled.
  4. For lapsed laity only. 4. First for monks only; later for clergy and laity both.
  5. No ritualistic absolution. 5. First a deprecatory "We" absolution; later a declarative "I" absolution.

Before the Anglo-Saxon System became a sacrament and before the "I" absolution was introduced, the necessity of confessing sins was hotly disputed and generally held salutary but not obligatory. In 1215 Rome made confession of sins obligatory for both the mortal sinner and the faithful.

#### THE PENITENTIAL CANONS WERE AT FIRST FOR MONKS ONLY

As soon as monks and clergymen were admitted to penance (7th to 9th cent.), the duration of penance was shortened. The constant use of the pronoun "anyone" in rules which could not pertain to the laity is still proof of the fact that the earliest penitential canons were drawn up for monks and regular priests only. Whether the monk had committed a mortal sin like murder, or broke the slightest monastic rule, he had to accuse himself to his superior or penitentiary who imposed on him a penance as prescribed by the penitential canons. When this monastic custom was gradually imposed on the laity, it developed into auricular confessions of both mortal and venial sins to a priest. Hence, the origin of the Sacrament of Penance could not be any more valid than the origin of monasticism itself (4th cent.).

The Irish Penitential, first drawn up in the 7th century, established the length of penance for fornication in its 16th

canon as follows: "If anyone commits fornication without begetting a child . . . If a cleric, he shall do penance for three years; if a monk or deacon, five years; if a presbyter, seven years; if a bishop, twelve years" (*Migne, P.L. 80, 226*). Canon 39 of the same Irish Penitential reads: "If anyone asked for a foot bath and instead washes himself completely, he shall do penance with a special fast (*Migne, P.L. 80, 230*). Thus, when all sins became pardonable, the first distinction between mortal and venial became obsolete, and the terms received the new meaning of big and small sins.

The Roman Penitential (9th cent.) contains similar penances for both big and small offenses of the clergy: "If anyone does not well guard the sacrifice (altar bread) and a mouse eats it, he shall do penance for 40 days . . . If a Deacon forgets to offer the oblation . . . If a Priest stammers over the Sunday prayer . . . (etc.);" (*Migne, P.L. 105, 701-702*).

Later, when rules for the laity were added, the copyists incorporated them without changing the name of the original manuscript. Therefore, it is impossible to ascribe an exact date of composition to any medieval penitential. Monastic confessions, as a rule, were not itemized, but the superiors wanted the gory details of anything pertaining to sex. The Irish Penitential, for example, rules: "If anyone commits theft, he shall do penance for one year" (*canon 4*). "If anyone gets into trouble and begets a child, he shall do penance for seven years on bread and water" (*canon 14*). "If anyone commits fornication like the Sodomites, he shall do penance for ten years" (*canon 15; Migne, P.L. 80, 226*). The same distinctions can be found in the Roman Penitential (*Migne, P.L. 105, 697*).

Because the early penances for accused sins were public, and were regulated by standardized canon laws, there was little room for a "seal" of confession. As the poor had to per-



form corporal punishment and the rich paid fines, the penitentiary not only knew the penitent but could demand any information about his financial status. The Penitential of Egbert rules in its very first canon: "It is proper for any priest (*sacerdos*), when he imposes the penance of fasting on persons, that he knows who he is, whether healthy or sick, rich or poor, young or old, (etc.)" (*Migne, P.L.* 89, 401).

The word "absolution," which became an established ecclesiastical term during the second penitential system, is derived from the Latin verb: *absolvere*, to loosen, to liberate, to let go free after due process of punishment. Though there can be no absolution without prior *ligation* (binding), the latter term was seldom employed. By necessity, however, the medieval absolution took place after the penitent had been bound with ecclesiastical penalty, and after he had fulfilled his entire penance. To pardon a criminal before he starts serving his sentence is a contradiction in legal procedure. Yet this is what Rome practises today. When a Roman Catholic of today confesses the sin of murder, the priest may impose on him the penalty of reciting the rosary every day for seven years, but the priest absolves (remits) his sins before the murderer starts his penance and allows him to Holy Communion even the day after the murder. This condition did not exist in the Middle Ages. During the second penitential system a penitent was not admitted to the sacraments until he had fulfilled his entire penance, and if he died suddenly without absolution he was considered lost. Confession and Absolution were two different rites, taking place on different dates. The 14th canon of the Irish Penitential, which we partly quoted above, imposes on a fornicator a penance "for seven years on bread and water; then for the first time, at the discretion of the priest, may he be united to the altar" (*Migne, P.L.* 80, 226). The post-Reformation Penitential of Milan (of Saint Charles Cardinal Borromeo, d.

1584) adhered to the rigid form of the early Middle Ages and ruled: "If anyone kills a man he shall always be at the door of the church, and at death he shall receive Communion" . . . "If anyone kills his mother, father or sister, he shall not take the Lord's body throughout his entire life, except at his death" . . . "A forger shall do penance on bread and water as long as he lives" (*Acta ecclesiae Mediolanensis, Milan, 1582*). Speaking of the 15th and 16th century, the Catholic Encyclopedia remarks: "Finally it became customary to let reconciliation follow immediately after confession" (*C.E.* 11, 632). This admitted fact is so important to understand that the pecuniary penances of this period were actually payments for the remission (absolution) of sin.

#### PECUNIARY PENANCES

When the British and Irish Bishops, most of whom were monks, imposed the monastic self-accusations and penances on the laity, they instituted the medieval practice of pecuniary penances. The rich could pay a fine instead of performing corporal punishment. The monetary unit used in the second penitential system was the *solidus*, a gold piece, which equalled twelve silver pieces (*denarius*). We know that in the 12th century France began to sell the Mass for one *denarius*, and the pope taxed every citizen of Britain one *denarius*. The *solidus* and *denarius* are often evaluated at \$3.00 and at 25 cents. This is entirely incorrect, considering the low cost of labor in former centuries. In any case the long and severe corporal penances and the easy pecuniary penances were way out of proportion, and encouraged the rich to pay off (redeem) their penances. Thus the penitential books became price lists of sins.

The first mention of some ecclesiastical fines is found in the Penitential attributed to or initiated by St. Egbert (d. 766), Archbishop of York (*canon 2; Migne, P.L.* 89, 403).



Similar fines are mentioned in the Penitential of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. His second canon states that "The bishop may dispense the cases of the poor up to 50 gold pieces (*solidi*)" (*Migne, P.L.* 99, 927). Disregarding the inflationary times we live in, the ninth-century penitentials gave the sinner a choice between living on bread and water for one year or paying a fine of \$80.00. A forty year or life long penance would equal a fine of \$3,000.00. We are not referring here to isolated cases or abuses, but to a general system adopted by Rome in the ninth century. The Catholic Encyclopedia explains: "Instead of one year on bread and water, give twenty-six *solidi*" . . . Here we have the beginning of the so-called 'Redemptions' which soon passed into general usage" (*C.E.* 7, 786).

A one year penance or \$80.00 fine could be slapped on a person for almost any violation, whether public or confessed. The 10th-century Penitential of Abbot Regino (915) ruled, for example: "He who has intercourse with his wife during the 40 days before Easter and refuses to abstain from her, shall do penance for one year, or he shall pay to the church the price, namely twenty-six gold pieces (*viginti sex solidos*)" (*Migne, P.L.* 132, 256). The 11th-century Penitential in the *Summa* of Bishop Burchard of Worms (d. 1025) has a nearly identical canon: "He who has intercourse . . . , or shall pay to the church the price, namely twenty-five gold pieces (*aut pretium, videlicet, viginti quinque solidorum ad ecclesiam tribuat*)" (*Burchard, Decretum, bk 19, canon 75; Migne, P.L.* 140, 1009). Thus in Germany one could buy the absolution three dollars cheaper. We also read of a priest in Soest who was caught charging a fine to all married people, either for having indulged in sexual pleasures during Lent, or for having practised birth control during that period.

It was also a general practice in the 11th century to impose on the illiterate peasants the reading of the 150 Psalms

of the Bible. As the majority of the monks could not read their own native language, one can imagine how many lay people could read the Latin Psalter, or possessed one. Those unable to read were given a fine. Fines, like stipends, have always been charged under the pretext of "alms," and it is interesting to see how the expressions "to the poor" and "to the church" became synonymous. The penitential fines, however, were not paid to the poor but to the priest who fined the poor as well as the rich.

"He who does not know the Psalms must do penance one day on bread and water; the rich may redeem themselves with three silver pieces and the poor with one silver piece (*denarius*)" (*canon 15*). "He who does not know the Psalms and cannot fast must give to the poor in alms 22 gold pieces (*solidus*) for each year's penance on bread and water" (*canon 20; Penitential of Burchard; Migne, P.L.* 140, 982).

The ninth-century pecuniary penance of the West is the first instance of authorized use of money in the Christian Church. The seventh-century stipends for Baptisms and Communion had been condemned, and the monetary collections, tithes and Mass-stipends were not officially introduced till the 12th and 13th centuries. Through the use of money the rich could obtain immediate absolution, while the poor were in danger of dying without it. Through the use of money the rich were admitted immediately to the sacraments, while the poor might be forced to live their entire life without the sacramental grace of the Eucharist. Since Rome claims that the priestly absolution from penance constitutes the actual remission of sin, it follows that the remission of sins and the sacramental grace of the Eucharist could be obtained by money, that is, could be bought.

Beginning with the ninth century, the churches of Continental Europe installed in front of their chancel (altar) a "Script-box" or desk on which was placed the Book of Pen-



itual Canons, which listed in systematic order the penances and the prices for the remission of sins. Behind this desk sat the bishop, priest or penitentiary meting out fines and penalties like a judge in court. Secret "confession boxes," as in use today, were unknown during the era of public penances. Bishop Odo of Paris, for example, in the council of 1197 A.D., decreed: Except in case of extreme necessity or sickness, "no one shall hear confessions in secret places (in locis abditis)" (*Mansi* 22, 678).

The strangest thing about this new way of salvation (price-lists for sins) is the fact that nobody knows who originated this sacrament-in-the-making. We know it came from the isles West of Europe, but we do not know the person who first conceived this idea. Not even the Christians of the ninth century knew where it came from. The custom might have existed on these isles before Christianity, but it was introduced to the Western Church without an Ecumenical Council or Papal Bull.

These price-lists or penitential books met with great opposition in Europe. The French Council of Chalons in 813 condemned them as "'catalogs' which are called 'Penitentials', and whose known errors and unknown authors can be rightly described thus: 'They killed souls which should not die, and they saved souls which should not live' (Ezek. 13:19)" (*Council of Chalons, canon 38; Mansi* 14, 101). The Council of Paris in 829 condemned the invention in identical language, stating that these Penitentials were written without canonical authority, and that the priests who use them either out of ignorance or indifference rather injure than cure the wounds of the sinners, and that they themselves shall be under judgment: 'My hand shall be upon the prophets that see vain things and divine lies' (Ezek. 13:9) (*Council of Paris, 829 A.D., canon 32; Mansi* 14, 559-560). As late as the 12th century, John of Salisbury in his *Polycraticus* (bk 7,

chapt. 21) criticizes the easy payments of the rich (*Migne, P.L.* 199, 693).

The rich were in favor of having a choice and opportunity of paying a fine instead of the long public penances. The immoral bishops were in favor of a novelty which allowed them to collect thousands of dollars. The bishopric of Rome had fallen into the hands of immoral king-popes who could use the new source of income. Thus, just before the reign of Popess Joan (854-857), Rome tacitly adopted the system of pecuniary penances and abolished her first penitential system.

Though the Anglo-Saxon penitential system gradually developed into a sacrament (13th cent.) which again strangled the public penances (15th cent.), it is rather surprising that Catholic scholars of today are allowed to admit the man-made origin and gradual development of one of their sacraments. Their statements, however, are so vague, and their writings so unpopular that the masses never benefit by them. The Catholic Encyclopedia, for example, explains that the Second Penitential System "had the effect of a system of police" (*C.E.* 1, 508). "Substitutes and so-called Redemptions, which consisted in pecuniary donations . . . gradually gained entrance and vogue; all this necessitated the drawing up of comprehensive lists of the various crimes and of penances to be imposed for them, so that a certain uniformity among confessors might be reached" (*C.E.* 6, 605-606). "The numerous so-called Penitential Books (*Libri Poenitentiales*)", explains the same source, are "collections made in and in vogue from the seventh century. These canons and the penitential discipline they represent were introduced to the Continent by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, and were at first received unfavourable . . . finally, however, they were adopted and gradually mitigated" (*C.E.* 11, 636-667). "These books were not written for . . . an ad-

vance in the science of moral theology, but [they mark] rather a standing-still, nay, even a decadence . . . Theology in particular rose again to new life towards the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century. A new current of healthy development was noticeable . . . a new strength infused into the practice of the confessors . . . With the gradual dying out of the Public Penances, the Penitential Books lost their importance" (*C.E.* 6, 606). "With these modifications the ancient usage has practically disappeared by the middle of the sixteenth century" (*C.E.* 11, 632). "Baptism is developed into Confirmation on the one hand; into Penance, Purgatory and Indulgences on the other" (*Cardinal J. H. Newman, Development of Christian Doctrine; New York, 1949, p. 87*).

The Protestant Reformation was a protest against the selling of salvation by means of Sacraments, Masses and Purgatories, and it restored the biblical teaching of salvation by grace and faith alone. The medieval Roman practices were so generally exposed that Rome was forced to reform somewhat herself. Though the new ritual forbids the medieval custom of pecuniary penances, the priests continued to receive stipends for their penitential services. The 19th-century Councils of Cologne (1860) and of Utrecht (1865) vainly tried to abolish the general custom of imposing great numbers of Mass stipends as penance for sin (*Mansi* 48, 141). The practice persisted and present day confession boxes in some European countries still have two-way slits in their walls for monetary transactions with the priest. In the United States the practice of payment for the Sacrament of Penance has completely disappeared. Payment for the other sacraments and for Masses is still continued under the name and pretext of stole fees and stipends.

IS CONTRITION OF THE HEART ALONE SUFFICIENT FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS OR MUST ONE PERFORM PENANCE ALSO? IS IT SUFFICIENT TO CONFESS TO GOD ALONE, OR MUST ONE CONFESS THE SINS TO A PRIEST?

When Rome in the 9th century abolished the catechumenate and adopted a new penitential system, it had become customary to liturgically confess post-baptismal sins directly to God. As God knows the sins of man, no itemized confession was necessary. When this liturgical confession came to be said in the singular, it received the name of "Confiteor" (I confess). "Since about the IXth century a custom arose, North of the Alps, of making a general confession and absolution" (*Fortescue, The Mass, p. 285*). For 400 years, that is, from Charlemagne (800) to Innocent III (1215), the theologians argued about the necessity of auricular confessions and priest-imposed penances. The greedy clergy was in favor of compulsory confessions with pecuniary penances, the scholars and the councils appear to oppose the novelty, but for political reasons preferred to stay neutral.

The Council of Chalons (813), which so vehemently attacked the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials, recommends the following general confession: "We confess our sins rightly to God who is the Remitter of sins, and with David we say: 'I have acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said: I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord and Thou hast remitted the iniquity of my sin' (Ps. 32:5). And according to the precept of the Apostle (James 5:16) we confess our sins one to another" (*Council of Chalons II, canon 33; Mansi 14, 100*). This council is also the first to mention that the West was divided into two factions or by two schools of thought in matters of confession and penance. Yet the council prefers to stay neutral and diplomatically states: "Some say that they ought to



confess their sins to God alone, and some think that they are to be confessed to the priests; both of which are practised in the Holy Church not without great fruit (*quod utrumque non sine magno fructu intra sanctam fit ecclesiam*)" (*Mansi* 14, 100). We see, therefore, that the Protestant way of confessing sins directly to God was still practised in the ninth-century Western Church "not without great fruit." At this time the West had begun to resent the Eastern dominated Ecumenical Councils, but the proverbial 'Whore House' of Rome had not yet developed into a Western Papacy. Therefore, there was no official body in the West to settle the question.

The 10-century Irish Confiteor, falsely attributed to St. Patrick (see *Hist. of Dogma*, vol. 2, p. 55), was based on Psalm 51:4 "Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram Te feci; Against Thee alone have I sinned and I have done evil in Thy sight" (*Vulgate*, Ps. 50:6). Because the sins were committed in the sight of God in heaven and in the sight of the saints (faithful) on earth, the early Irish Church thought that they ought to be confessed to God in the presence of the congregation. The old custom of the Irish laity to confess their sins directly to God existed alongside the penitential custom of Irish monks to confess their sins to priests. The Irish Penitential Canons gradually supplanted the biblical way of confession. St. Anselm (d. 1109), Archbishop of Canterbury, explained in his book "Why God Became Man" that sin cannot be forgiven without satisfaction, that man cannot bring satisfaction for his sins, and that for this very reason Christ became man to atone for all sins of all men who repent (*Anselm, Cur Deus Homo*, bk 1, chap. 20 & 25; bk 2, chap. 6; *Migne*, P.L. 159, 392 & 399 & 404).

Peter Abelard (d. 1142), the father of scholasticism, taught "that the power of binding and loosing was given to the apostles only, but not to their successors" (*Mansi* 21, 569).

Abelard was a contemporary of the Italian bishop, Gregory of Bergamo, who still omits Penance in his list of seven Sacraments. In his famous book "Sic et Non" (Pro and Con), Abelard raises the question (no. 151): "Whether sins are remitted without confession?" He lists the Fathers who taught that the contrition of the heart alone was sufficient, and those who seemed to stress confession to a priest. He leaves the question wide open (*Migne*, P.L. 178, 1599).

Pope Alexander III, who wrote a Summa before he became pope (1159), followed Abelard in matters of Penance. He also writes on the common argument of his day: "That sin is remitted by the contrition of the heart alone (*in sola cordis contritione*) is proved by the authority of the Lord who said through the prophet: 'At whatever hour the sinner shall be converted and shall grieve, I will not remember any of his sins' (free quotation of Ezek. 33:12-16 and Ps. 32:5)" (*Die Sentenzen Rolands*, Freiburg, 1891, p. 243-251). His views were later opposed by Pseudo-Hugo (c. 1200).

Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141) is not the author of the "Summa Sententiarum" attributed to him. This Summa is not only spurious, but has been revised. Pseudo-Hugo believed in *multa sacramenta* and in confessions to priests. Among his sacraments of Holy Ashes, Holy Palms, Holy Candles and Holy Water, we find a chapter "On Confession and Penance and Remission of sins" (*Migne*, P.L. 176, 550-578). This lengthy name for the new Sacrament was common in the Middle Ages, because this Sacrament did not consist of one single liturgical rite. The rite of confession and the rite of remission may be twelve years apart. This treatise on Confession is directed against the followers of St. Jerome, Peter Abelard and Pope Alexander. Confession to a priest is indirectly made essential to obtaining God's pardon. In order to prove this, the Summa invented the distinction between *culpa* (guilt) and *paena* (punishment) of sin. This Summa

is valuable because it indirectly shows what the contemporaries of Pseudo-Hugo were teaching at the end of the 12th century:

"Some endeavor to ascribe the power of remitting sins to God alone in such a way that they wholly deny that man can be made a partaker therein. And as proof of this assertion they refer to the cleansing of that leper whom the Lord by his own power first restored to health, and then sent him thus to the priests: not that the cleansing might be effected by their power, but only that their testimony may confirm it. In the same manner today in our church, they say, the offices of the priests have no more power than what are certain symbols only; they say that he who is first absolved by the Lord through contrition of the heart within, later is declared by them to have been absolved through the confession of the mouth. That sins are remitted by the contrition of the heart alone and before the confession of the mouth, they attempt to prove by the prophetic testimony which says: 'At whatsoever hour the sinner shall grieve, he shall be saved' (Ezek. 33:12). And again: 'Because while you still speak I shall say: 'Behold here I am' (Isaiah 58:9). And the Psalmist says: 'I said I will confess against my transgression to the Lord, and thou hast remitted the iniquity of my sin' (Ps. 32:5) . . . By this manner of reasoning, therefore, they prove that men by no means have the power of remitting sins, but that this is God's prerogative alone, as also in the Gospels the Jews who murmured against the Lord, because He said to the paralytic: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee', said that God alone can forgive sins . . ." (Migne, P.L. 176, 564-565).

Here we see how later traditions (and spurious at that) condemn the earlier traditions of the church. All the Fathers and Saints of the early church, the very ones who fought the early heretics, are now declared heretics themselves in order to introduce a new Sacrament. Pseudo-Hugo con-

demns Bishop Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and especially St. Jerome: "But perhaps some one will object by saying that the priests bind many in the church who are not bound by God, and that they likewise absolve many who remained bound in the eyes of God . . ." (Migne, P.L. 176, 565). All these objections are direct quotations of the Fathers.

From this spurious Summa of a later era, we must return to the authentic writings of the 12th century. St. Bernard (d. 1153), for example, did not know the Summa of Hugo and did not know the distinction between *culpa* and *paena*.

John Gratian (1150), Italian scholar and greatest canonist, wrote his famous *Decretum* which contains a "Treatise on Penance" (*Pars 2, causa 35, quaestio 3*; Migne, P.L. 187, 1519). Gratian informs us that in 1150 A.D. the Western Church was still as divided on the subject of penance as it was in 813, though Gratian's church is now "Roman Catholic", headed by a Pope, Eugene III. Gratian explains both schools of thought and says that the first school maintains that any sin (*quemlibet criminis veniam*) can be forgiven through contrition of the heart alone (*sola cordis contritione*), without an oral confession to a priest (*absque oris confessione*). He lists the Fathers who support the first school and also quotes those who believe in oral confessions and penances. Without deciding the question, and impartially presenting both views, Gratian concludes:

"I have briefly stated on what authorities or on what strength of reason both opinions are based. Which of them we should rather adhere to is left to the judgment of the reader, for both have as their supporters wise and religious men" (*John Gratian, "On Penance"*; Migne, P.L. 187, 1562).

There is no doubt that these 12th-century quotations are authentic. They have been quoted throughout the centuries. St. Antoninus (d. 1459) still quotes the "pro et contra" of



Gratian in his *Summa*: "quia utraque opinio habet viros sapientes et religiosos" (*Antoninus, Summa, Venice, 1529, vol. 3, p. 129*). Here we have the greatest Italian canonist tell his readers that they are free to believe and follow either school, that is, the biblical way of salvation as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon way. Pope Eugene III condemned neither school (the whole argument was above his head anyhow). As the great canonist he is, Gratian unmistakably reveals that by the middle of the twelfth century there was no Roman Catholic or Papal canon law in existence which had settled this 400 year old controversy, one way or another.

Peter Lombard (d. 1164?), Archbishop of Paris, whose date of death seems to have been extended to 1164 in order to make this *Summa* authentic and thus avoid another Pseudo-Peter, favored the French school. In his *Book of Sentences* he raises the question: "Whether sin can be remitted without confession?" He quotes John Gratian verbatim: "First we ask whether sin can be remitted to anyone by the contrition of the heart alone, without satisfaction and without oral confession?" (*Migne, P.L. 192, 880*). By quoting Gratian's sources in favor of the second school, Peter Lombard concludes that "without vocal confession and without some discharge of punishment no one can be cleansed from sin" (*Peter Lombard, Sentences, bk 4, dist. 17: 1; Migne, P.L. 192, 881*).

Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* is the first *Summa* to contain seven sacraments identical to those of the Council of Trent, and the first *Summa* to teach that Confession and Penance are essential to obtaining remission of sin. But for some reason the 12th century did not accept his views.

Peter of Poitiers (d. 1215), who introduced the term "ex opere operato", uses the distinction "quoad culpam et quoad paenam" (*Migne, P.L. 211, 1234*). Though his *Book of Sentences* has been greatly revised and is partly spurious, it

still does not teach the Tridentine doctrine of the Sacrament of Penance.

Pope Innocent III (d. 1216) and his Fourth Lateran Council (1215) tried to settle the controversy dictatorially by making confession to a priest obligatory: "Omnis utriusque sexus fidelis . . . Everyone of the faithful of either sex, after having reached the years of discretion, shall faithfully confess all his sins, at least once a year, to the proper priest, and he shall strive to the best of his ability to fulfill the penance laid upon him" (*IV Lateran Council, 1215, canon 21; Mansi 22, 1007-1010*).

For the first time in the history of Christianity not only mortal sinners, but the "faithful", from the age of 14 (now 7), are forced under penalty of excommunication to accept the public penances of their parish (proper) priests. From now on no one can receive the Lord's Supper without first submitting himself to punishment. Though canon 21 deals only with discipline, and does not define a matter of faith, so as to say that confession to a priest is essential to the remission of sins, the fires of the Inquisition established in the minds of the faithful that Penance was a sacrament and that confession was an essential part of it. By citing John Calvin (d. 1564) and Prof. Henry Charles Lea (d. 1909) of Philadelphia, the Catholic Encyclopedia at least admits that non-Catholic scholars hold that the year 1215 is the date of origin of obligatory auricular confessions in the West (*C.E. 11, 626*).

Alanus de Insulis (13th cent.) defended the necessity of confession in his *Liber Sententiarum*, and condemned the Waldenses for teaching that confession to a layman is as beneficial as that to a priest, but the original text of his *Summa* has been falsified (*Migne, P.L. 210, 385*). In his *Penitential* he still teaches that in absence of a priest one may confess to a layman (*Migne, P.L. 210, 302*).

Everyone agrees that there was still a great confusion in matters of Penance from 1215 to 1439, that Public Penance co-existed with the new auricular confessions, and that the Schoolmen of this era did not agree with the Tridentine dogmas of the 16th century. The Summas of St. Raymond of Penafort (1235), St. Alexander of Hales (1245), St. Albert the Great (c. 1250), St. Thomas Aquinas (1273), St. Bonaventure (d. 1274), etc., have been mutilated and have been so often revised that it is impossible to conclude from the current editions where and how much they differed.

John Wycliff (d. 1384) still taught that "If a man is duly repentant, any outward confession is superfluous and useless." His 15th-century followers were so strongly opposed to the Lateran decree of auricular confession, that the Council of Constance found it necessary to condemn the 'heresy' (*Mansi* 27, 632).

The Council of Florence (1439) is said to have finally and fully defined all **essential** teachings related to the modern Sacrament of Penance, but its canons lacked the solemn ratification of those of the Council of Trent (1551). The last controversies, therefore, were not dogmatically settled till after the death of Martin Luther.

The Reformers of the 16th century rightly rejected the Roman Sacrament of Penance, because it is not based on the Scriptures. The Western church had stumbled from one man-made system to another in order to cope with post-baptismal sins, and did not declare it a **sacrament** till more than a thousand years after Christ. The **medieval** system of fixed penances for sins, which gave the name to the Roman Sacrament, has been rejected by the East as well as by the Western Protestants.

## PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

### *ARE THERE TWO JUDGMENTS: PARTICULAR AND GENERAL, FIRST AND LAST?*

Before we can treat on Judgment, Purgatory and Limbo, we ought to take a quick look at biblical eschatology. The Bible speaks of everlasting life and everlasting fires, but its terminology of places and conditions in the hereafter is mostly symbolic. The New Testament was not written in a newly created language, but in the old, pagan language of the Greeks. Not only does the Bible use old Greek expressions and representations to explain the hereafter, but its stories of Dives and Lazarus in Hades (Luke 16:23) and the Angels of the Bottomless Pit (Rev. 9:11) are parables and visions which may not be taken in their literal sense. It is up to theologians to explain what part of the Bible is to be taken literally, what part figuratively. The historian, however, treats on biblical terms as they are and reports where these terms are used in patristic literature and medieval liturgy.

The Bible mentions Heaven (Shamayim, Ouranos) 730 times, Hell (Sheol, Hades, Geenna) 87 times, but it does not mention a Particular Judgment, Purgatory, or Limbo. In the



English New Testament Bible, the word Hell appears 22 times: that is, 10 times as a translation of the Greek word "Hades" and 12 times for the Greek word "Geenna". It is unfortunate that the English translators obscured the original distinction. The Latin Vulgate translates them correctly as "Infernus" and "Gehenna".

If we take the literal sense of the biblical account, Hades is the Region of the Dead, the Lower Region, an Intermediate State, a temporary abode where the dead await the Resurrection and Judgment. Hell (Gehenna) is a place of everlasting fire, prepared by God for the Devil and his fallen angels. Hades is temporal, Hell is eternal. Hades is for the just and unjust alike, Hell is for the damned only. Hades lasts till the Last Judgment, after which the damned shall be cast into Hell with the fallen angels. The word "damned" (dammati) implies that Judgment has taken place, and, therefore, always refers to Hell.

The Latin translation of Hades is *Infernus* or *Inferus*, the translation for Hell is *Gehenna*. Christ did not descend into Hell (in Gehennam), but "He descended first into the lower parts of the earth (descendit primum in inferiores partes terrae)" (*Eph. 4:9*), He went to the inhabitants of Hades (ad Inferos) (*Apostles' Creed*), and spent three days "in Hades" (in Inferno) (*Acts 2:31*). The "rich man" (Dives) was not in Hell (in Gehenna), but was with Lazarus in Hades (in Inferno) (*Luke 16:23*). It is not the Gate of Hell, but the "Gates of Hades" (portae Inferi) which shall not prevail against Christ and His followers (church) (*Matt. 16:18*).

Hades, which is not a place of fire, is mentioned 10 times in the N.T. Bible (*Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27; 2:31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13; 20:14*). Hell, which is synonymous with "Hell fire", "everlasting fire" and "fire that cannot be quenched", is mentioned 12 times in the N.T. Bible (*Matt. 5:22; 5:29; 5:30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15; 23:33;*

*Mark 9:43; 9:45; 9:47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6*). According to the parable, Hades is divided into two places: the Bosom of Abraham (sinus Abrahae) and the Place of Torments (locus tormentorum) (*Luke 16:22-28*). The torments are caused by a mysterious "Flame" (flamma) (*Luke 16:24*). The Bosom of Abraham is a place of comfort. One is a place of light, the other of darkness. The two are divided by a Great Gulf (Mega Chasma, Magnum Chaos). According to the prophetic view the dead were sitting in darkness (in tenebris) till the time of Christ when a great light (lux) appeared in the Region of the Shadow of Death (in regione umbrae mortis) (*Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79*). Hades is also a place where the dead are bound in prison (in carcere). When Christ descended into Hades he preached to the spirits there (*I Peter 3:19*). It is a place where the souls are in Outer Darkness (in tenebras exteriores) (*Matt. 25:30*). Christ has dominion over death, has the keys of Hades (*Rev. 1:18*), and is said to have delivered the souls of the Patriarchs and Prophets from Hades into a new place, higher than Hades, called Paradise (*Luke 23:43*). Paradise is a place of rapture, called by Paul a "third heaven" (*II Cor. 12:4*), and in prophetic and patristic language it is identified with the Garden of Eden (*Rev. 2:7*).

As Paradise became an abode for the just who had been delivered from Hades (a place for O.T. Patriarchs and Prophets and for N.T. Martyrs) and who enjoyed a foretaste of heavenly bliss without beatific vision, so also there was created a new abode for the unjust to give them a foretaste of Hell. This region is located lower than Hades, and is called the Bottomless Pit (Abyssus) (*Rev. 9:1; 9:2; 9:11; etc.*), also identified with Tartarus (*II Peter 2:4*) and with Hell itself.

In the O.T. the Deep (Tehom) is represented by the Sea (Thalassa, Mare), in the N.T. the Bottomless Pit (Abyssus,

Abyss) is mentioned nine times and is portrayed as a subterranean pit or gulf, evidently extending from Hades to Hell. Like Hell itself, it is a place where there shall be "wailing and gnashing of teeth" (*fletus et stridor dentium*) (*Matt. 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30*). The Abyss is also likened unto a devil in the form of a huge "roaring lion" (*I Peter 5:8*) who seeks to devour the souls of the dead in Hades (*quaerens quem devoret*). Those in Hades pray that they may be delivered from the Mouth of the Lion (*de ore Leonis*) (*II Tim. 4:17*). Another metaphor is that of devils dragging the souls of Hades by infernal ropes (*rudentibus Inferni*) into Tartarus (*in Tartarum*) (*II Peter 2:4*), where they may be cast into a "Furnace of fire" (*in caminem ignis*) (*Matt. 13:42*), or in a "Lake of fire" (*in stagnum ignis*) (*Rev. 19:20*). In spite of all the terms used in these visions, parables and metaphors, the Bible still does not mention Purgatory.

In Norse mythology Hel was the goddess of the dead and the queen of the underworld. In Greek mythology Hades was the god of the underworld. Yet the Greek philosophers did no more believe that Mr. Hades was a real person than we believe in the real existence of Uncle Sam and John Bull. It seems clear that in the Bible, especially in prophetic and visionary language, each section of the Lower Regions is closed off by a gate which is guarded by a special angel or devil to whom is given a name. The book of Revelation informs us that the Angel who has the key of the Bottomless Pit is called "Abaddon in Hebrew, but in Greek he has the name of Apollyon" (*Rev. 9:11*). The Roman Bible added to this text: "and in Latin he has the name of Exterminator". This text does not only show the disregard of the Word of God for the Latin Church, but also the disregard of the Latin Church for the Word of God. Because Hades is divided into two parts, it has two angels who have the keys to the

gates. One is called "Death" (*Thanatos* or *Mors*) who rides a pale horse (*Rev. 6:8*); the other angel is called "Hades" or *Infernus* who follows *Mors*. A third angel, the Sea (*Thalassa* or *Mare*), seems to be the guardian of the Deep (*Rev. 20:13*). After the judgment these angels or infernal guardians shall be cast in Hell (*Rev. 20:14*). Two faithful Angels are called "Faithful and True" (*Pistos* and *Alethinos*; or *Fidelis* et *Verax*) who ride a white horse (*Rev. 19:11*). It would seem that "Zophos" or *Caligo* is the name of the Angel of Gloom or Darkness who guards the gate of Hell wherein the fallen angels are cast (*Jude 6 & 13; II Peter 2:4; 2:17*). The regions of darkness, death, etc., may also be explained as being named after their symbolic guardians. The Dragon is the leader of the fallen angels, Michael is the leader of the faithful angels (*Rev. 12:7*). In patristic literature Michael came to be known as the guardian of Paradise (*cf. Gen. 3:24*).

Until the Day of Judgment, Heaven (*caelum*) is the abode of God and his angels; the Earth (*terra*) is the abode of the living sons of Adam; Hades is the abode of the dead; and Hell is the abode of the Devil and his fallen angels (*Ps. 115:16; Luke 16:23; Matt. 23:15; Rev. 20:13; Acts 2:31*). Paradise is the foretaste of Heaven, Tartarus or the Pit is the foretaste of Hell. If we add to this the Heaven of heavens, we have a total of seven regions. The just in Hades are not burning in fires, nor are they singing Halleluiahs, but they are sleeping while awaiting the resurrection (*Matt. 27:52; I Cor. 15:20; 15:51; I Thes. 4:13-17*). Hence the Mass of Requiem (rest), quoting the apocryphal Fourth Book of Esdras (6), asked for "eternal rest" (*requiem eternam*), "perpetual light" (*lux perpetua*) and "rest in peace" (*requiescat in pace*), etc., expressions which are not in the Bible. Even our cemeteries are called after the Greek word "koimao", to sleep (*I Thes. 4:14*), and have the meaning of sleeping places.



The Bible further speaks of "the resurrection of the just" (*Luke 14:14*), a "New Jerusalem" (*Rev. 3:12*), "the Kingdom of heaven" (*Matt. 3:2*), "we shall reign upon the earth" (*Rev. 5:10*), the just and martyrs "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Chilia or Millennium) (*Rev. 20:4*), "the first resurrection" (*Rev. 20:5*), "but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (*Rev. 20:5*). After one thousand years the resurrection of all the dead (the unjust) and the Judgment will take place (*Rev. 20:12*), and the wicked will be cast in the lake of fire, which is called "the second death" (*Rev. 20:14*). "We who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be with the Lord forever (beatific vision) (*I Thes. 4:17*).

With all its metaphors, visions and prophecies, the Bible still does not mention a Purgatory, nor a temporal fire which will purge the dead from their sins. Purging sins by fire is a doctrine taught by the ancient Greek philosophers. In the Bible the sins are purged by blood; the unpurged are punished in everlasting fire.

The "fire" mentioned in *I Cor. 3:13* is neither a fire of punishment, nor a fire of purging, but a trial by fire (the judgment itself). A trial is a judgment which precedes reward or punishment. This trial by fire is to take place after the resurrection when Purgatory is said to have been terminated. On this last day, man's innocence or guilt "shall be revealed by fire (ignis probabit)" (*I Cor. 3:13*). Hence the just and unjust alike have to go through this fire. As God is not in need of fire to judge man's soul, this judgment's fire is evidently a figure of speech, symbolizing a test of separation such as in the refining processes of precious metals where "gold is tried by fire" (*Rev. 3:18*). In another metaphor man's deeds are not manifested by fire, but "by light" (a lumine manifestatur) (*Eph. 5:13*).

Our English word "fire" is related to the Greek word "pur". Our word "purgatory" is not related to the Greek "pur". It means a place of purging, purifying sins, without revealing the method. The Greek Orthodox Church does not believe in the Western purging fires of purgatory. The East believes in an Intermediate State where the dead await the judgment. The Greeks speak of "katharos", pure, clean; "katharizo", to purify, to cleanse; "katharsis", purification. Except where the Hebrews used water or ashes, "almost all things . . . are purged with blood" (*Heb. 9:21*). "The blood of Christ . . . shall purge your conscience" (*Heb. 9:14*). "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (*I John 1:7 & 9*). "He had by Himself purged our sins" (purgationem peccatorum faciens) (*Heb. 1:3*). "He was purged from his old sins" (accipiens oblivionem purgationis veterum suorum delictorum) (*II Peter 1:9*). The only 'purgatory' the apostles preached was "the Lord Jesus Christ" who shed His blood on Calvary for all sinners. As Christ was expected to return soon, the early Christians were little concerned with the fires of the hereafter, but prayed to God: "May Thy kingdom come".

#### BISHOP TERTULLIAN'S ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEWS

Tertullian (d. 230), Bishop of Carthage and founder of the Latin Church, explained some of the biblical visions and parables in their literal meaning. He does not expound his interpretations as dogmas, but admits that some of his opinions are based on conjectures, others on reason. His views are important, not only because he is the very first Latin Father (Migne, P.L. vol. 1), but his views are still found in the Roman Ritual and Missal of today.

In the 55th chapter of his treatise *On the Soul* (*De Anima* 55) Tertullian explains that Heaven is the abode of God, which shall remain closed to man till the earth has been

destroyed. Paradise is the abode of the O.T. Patriarchs and Prophets. No one of the N.T. can enter Paradise unless he sheds his life's blood for the Kingdom. All non-martyrs go to Hades, the subterranean region of the dead. Hades is the Middle Place, the "Interim", the waiting place, the abode of both the good and the bad. No one can be released from Hades before the resurrection, but all await the Day of Judgment (*Migne, P.L. 2, 788, 789, 798, 992*).

Hades is divided into two regions. It is the dwelling for the wicked as well as for the innocent, the infant and the virgin (*Anima 56*). It is not unreasonable to believe that the Just in Hades have already a foretaste of Heaven and the Wicked have already a foretaste of Hell (*Anima 58*). Tertullian, therefore, denies the immediate glorification and the beatific vision of the just before the Judgment Day (*Migne, P.L. 2, 796*). The wicked may experience some punishment or discipline in Hades, but are not punished by fire, because the soul (without the body) is not capable of suffering from material fire (*Apologeticus 48; Migne, P.L. 1, 591*). Hence he denies a pre-resurrectional Purgatory.

The Coming of the Lord is at hand (*De Spectaculis 30; Migne, P.L. 1, 736*). There will be two resurrections. The resurrection of the Just, who will reign on this earth for one thousand years, precedes the resurrection of the wicked. The wicked stay in Hades during the Kingdom of the Just (*regnum justorum*), which is called the City of New Jerusalem (*Migne, P.L. 1, 736*). After this comes the resurrection of the wicked and the Judgment Day (*"De Iudicio Dei"; Apologeticus 48; Migne, P.L. 1, 591*).

Tertullian believed in praying for the souls of the just who are awaiting the first resurrection and its Millennium, but he did not believe in praying souls "out of" Hades (*Migne, P.L. 2, 788*). The young widow, for example, prays for her departed husband, but she asks only that he might find "a cool

spot" (*refrigerium*) while he sleeps in Hades (*Interim*) and that he may have participation in the first resurrection (*pro anima ejus orat et refrigerium interim adpostulat ei, et in prima resurrectione consortium*) (*Monogamia 10; Migne, P.L. 2, 992*). On the anniversary of her husband's death, the young widow goes to church and during the offertory she offers an extra loaf of bread for his sleep (*dormitionis ejus; Migne, P.L. 2, 992*). She believes that during her lifetime Christ will return and restore her husband to her. These anniversary oblations for the departed (*oblaciones pro defunctis*) are not priestly sacrifices or Masses, but offerings and communions by the laity, a symbolic breaking of bread with the dead, a *eulogia* which unites the living and the dead while awaiting the coming of Christ (*De Corona 3; Migne, P.L. 2, 99; De Anima 51; Migne, P.L. 2, 782*).

Thus is the oldest of all Latin traditions, as found in the first volume of Migne's Latin Fathers. The great Bishop Tertullian knows nothing about a Particular Judgment, the Fires of a Purgatory, and the priestly practice of praying souls out of Hades for a sum of money. If the founder of Latin Christianity erred in the most fundamental teachings of eschatology, what does the Council of Trent mean by oral teachings which the Latin Church received from the mouth of Christ Himself?

### THE MODERN "REQUIEM MASS"

The modern Roman Catholic Funeral Masses, Requiem Masses, Anniversary Masses and various liturgical prayers for departed souls are borrowed from the 8th-century Roman ritual, which again is based on the African Ritual which contains the theology of Bishop Tertullian. The modern Funeral Mass, though taking place three days after the death and particular judgment of a deceased Catholic, knows nothing about a particular judgment or a fiery Purgatory,



and only speaks of a Judgment to come.

"Give them, O Lord, Eternal Rest (*Requiem eternam*) and let Perpetual Light (*Lux perpetua*) shine upon them . . . We humbly beseech Thee in behalf of the soul of thy servant X whom Thou this day called out of this world, that Thou wouldst not deliver her (the soul) into the hands of the Enemy (in *manus Inimici*), nor forget her for ever, but command the holy angels to take her and lead her to the Land of Paradise (*ad Patriam Paradisi*) . . . that she may not endure the pains of Hades (*non paenas Inferni sustineat*), but may possess eternal joys (*ut gaudia aeterna possideat*) . . . Absolve Thou, O Lord, the souls of all the faithful departed from every bond of sins (*Absolve, Domine, animas omnium fidelium defunctorum ab omni vinculo delictorum*) . . . and with the help of Thy grace may they merit to escape the Judgment of Revenge (*mereantur evadere Judicium Ultionis*) . . . Day of Wrath, this dreadful Day, shall reduce the world into ashes, as foretold by both David and the (pagan) Sibyl (*Dies irae, dies illa, solvet saeculum in favilla, Teste David cum Sibylla*) . . . Death (*Mors*) shall stand appaled, so shall Nature, when the creature rises at the call of the Judge . . . O righteous Judge of Revenge (*Judex Ultionis*), grant me the gift of remission before the Day of Reckoning (*ante Diem Rationis*). Deliver the souls (*animas*) of all the faithful departed from the pains of Hades and from the Deep Lake [*Pit*] (*de paenis Inferni et de Profundo Laco*), deliver them from the Lion's Mouth (*libera eas de Ore Leonis*), that Tartarus may not swallow them up (*ne absorbeat eas Tartarus*), that they may not fall into Darkness (*ne cadant in Obscurum*), but may the holy standard-bearer, Michael, lead them into the holy Light (*in lucem sanctam*), which Thou didst promise to Abraham and to his seed. We offer to Thee, O Lord, offerings and prayers (*hostias et preces*); do Thou receive them in behalf of the souls (*pro animabus*) whom we

commemorate today. Allow them, O Lord, to cross over from Death to Life (*de morte transire ad vitam*) . . . May she (soul) merit to come to everlasting rest (*ad requiem sempiternam*) . . . May the soul . . . be cleansed (*purgata*) by these offerings (his *sacrificiis*) and be absolved from sins (a *peccatis expedita*), and may she receive pardon and at the same time everlasting rest (*indulgentiam pariter et requiem sempiternam*)."

After the Mass, the prayers for burial continue: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, because no man shall be justified in thy sight, unless through Thee remission of all sins has been granted unto him. Therefore, we ask, that thy judicial sentence may not crush him, whom the true supplication of the Christian faith commends to Thee; but rather with the help of thy grace may he merit to escape the Judgment of Wrath, who, when alive, was signed with the seal of the Holy Trinity [*baptismal chrism*]."

"Deliver me, O Lord, (*Libera me*), from Eternal Death (*de morte aeterna*) in that awful Day when the heavens and the earth shall be moved, when Thou shall come to JUDGE the world BY FIRE (*per ignem*). . . . O that Day, the Day of Wrath (*dies irae*), of calamity and of misery, this great and most bitter Day . . . From the gates of Hades rescue his soul, O Lord, (a *porta Inferi erue, Domine, animam ejus*). May he rest in peace, Amen. . . . Absolve, we ask O Lord, the soul of thy servant . . . and wipe away the sins (*absterge venia*) he may have committed."

"May the angels (*Angeli*) lead thee into Paradise (in *Paradisum*), may the Martyrs (*Martyres*) receive thee at thy coming and lead thee into the Holy City of Jerusalem (in *civitatem sanctam Jerusalem*). May the choir of angels (*chorus angelorum*) receive thee and mayest thou have REST (*habeas requiem*) with Lazarus . . . O God, by whose mercy the souls of the faithful find rest (*requiescunt*), deign to



bless this grave (hunc tumulum) and appoint thy holy Angel to keep watch over it . . . Let us pray: Grant to thy servant departed, O Lord, we pray, this favour, that he may not receive punishment for his deeds (factorum suorum in paenis non recipiat vicem) . . ."

The Second Mass of All Souls' Day (Nov. 2) reads: "O God, Lord of pardons, give to the souls (animabus) of thy servants a Place of Refreshment (Refrigerii sedem), happiness of rest and clarity of light." etc., etc.

Anyone understands that it is not fitting for man to pray to God in parables and riddles. The early Latin Church prayed in this manner because it believed in the real existence of Hades and in the one judgment on the last day. The text of the Roman Ritual no longer fits the new theology of Rome which holds that the gates of Heaven and Hell can be entered by man before the Last Judgment, and that man can be sentenced to the fires of Purgatory by a Particular Judgment which would make the biblical Day of Judgment unnecessary.

## TWO JUDGMENTS

Since the 14th century Rome holds that there are two judgments by God: a Particular Judgment immediately after the death of each individual and a General Judgment on the last day. Neither the Bible nor the Fathers divide God's judgment into a universal and individual trial.

The Bible speaks in the singular of "the day of judgment" (*in die judicii*; Matt. 12:36) and places this day in the future (Matt. 11:22; 11:24; 25:32; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:14; Rom. 2:3; II Peter 2:4; 2:9; 3:7; I John 4:17; Rev. 20:13). This day of judgment will be "on the last day" (*in novissimo die*; John 12:48).

Because this judgment is to take place on the "last" day, the Fathers began to call it "the Last Judgment" (*judicium*

*ultimum vel novissimum*). The Fathers did not introduce this term to indicate that there were two judgments, a first and a last, for then, according to the rules of the Greek and Latin grammars, they would have employed the *dual* form: "Later Judgment" (*ulterior*). St. Augustine (d. 430) wrote an entire treatise on the Last Judgment (*"De Judicio Novissimo"*) and tried to explain the strange adjective "Last" by saying that God judges us every minute of our lives, but on the last day He will subject us to a trial by fire: "Therefore, when we speak of the Day of God's Judgment, we add the word 'Last', because He judges us this very minute, and He has judged the world from the beginning of the human race" (*Ideo autem cum diem judicii Dei dicimus, addimus ultimum vel novissimum, quia et nunc judicat, et ab humani generis initio judicavit*; *Migne, P.L. 41, 659*). If Augustine had known of the existence of a "Particular" Judgment, he would have had no other choice but to mention it here.

Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604) constantly speaks of "the" judgment, always referring to the Last Judgment, and never to a Particular Judgment. The time which the dead spend in Hades is always referred to as the time "before the judgment" (*ante judicium*). This Pope writes: "'Now is the day of salvation' (*II Cor. 6:2*). Solomon likewise says: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it now: for there is no work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest' (*Eccles. 9:10*) . . . By which verses it is proven that in the same condition wherein a man departs from this world, in the same condition he is presented for the Judgment (*Ex quibus nimirum sententiis constat, quia qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in iudicio praesentatur*)" (*Gregory, Dialogues, bk 4, chapt. 39; Migne, P.L. 77, 396*). It is clear from the biblical reference to the "grave" or Hades, that the judgment takes place after the time spent in Hades, and that Hades itself does not improve the sinner. Pope



Gregory not only denies that sinners are sentenced and can serve their term immediately after death, but he confesses to not knowing "whether the souls of the Just can be received into Heaven before the restitution of the body (*Si ante restitutionem corporis recipiantur in coelo animae iustorum?*)" (*Migne, P.L. 77, 356*).

St. Bernard (d. 1153) held the Augustinian view of the Last Judgment (*Migne, P.L. 184, 1303*). The medieval rituals speak of the post-resurrectional judgment as the only judgment for man to fear. Down to the 14th century, before Pope Benedict XII (1334) had issued his Bull "Benedictus Deus" (*Mansi 25, 985*), and had defined his new doctrine "Concerning the Beatific Vision of God and the Last Things" (*De visione Dei beatifica et de Novissimis; Denzinger, No. 530*), it was considered heresy to hold the eschatological views which Rome holds today.

The Catholic Encyclopedia explains: "The Scriptural arguments in defense of the particular judgment must be indirect . . . There is no text of which we can certainly say that it expressly affirms this dogma" (*C.E. 8, 550*). Going from the Scriptures to Tradition, the same encyclopedia indirectly admits that the Fathers do not mention the Particular Judgment either: "Those who have opposed the doctrine of purgatory have confessed that prayers for the dead would be an unanswerable argument *if* the *modern doctrine* of a particular judgment had been received in the early ages" (*C.E. 12, 576*).

Christ came on earth for the very purpose of "saving" mankind from the wrath to come (*Matt. 24:22; Rom. 5:9; I Thes. 1:10*). The Bible, the Fathers and the modern Roman Ritual ("Dies Irae") constantly warn mankind against the Day of Wrath, but they never mention a Particular Judgment.

Though the doctrines of a Particular Judgment, the Middle

Place, Purgatory, Beatific Vision of the saints, etc., are one subject, i.e. the history of one cannot be fully understood without the history of the other, nevertheless we have divided these eschatological doctrines into separate chapters. To understand the Fathers my reader must disassociate himself from all the indoctrinations of his childhood and from all modern expressions, and he must restore the original meaning of all terms used. For example: a "soul" (*anima*) is a human being without a body, which exists in this precarious state only from the time of death to the day of resurrection. The soul, not being composed of matter, is not capable of being punished or consumed by material fire, etc., etc. We should also try to remain consistent in our own beliefs. If we believe that all souls enter immediately into Heaven, Hell or Purgatory, we must disbelieve the tales about ghosts dwelling in cemeteries, as told by Italian Saints; we must expel the superstitious fear of cemetery ghosts, as exhibited by the Irish; we must disown the superstitious cemetery rites, as practiced by the Spanish.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE MIDDLE PLACE

#### *DID THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH BELIEVE IN AN INTERMEDIATE STATE?*

The Middle Place (Hades, Sinus Abrahae, Interim, Regiones Inferiores, Locus Infernus, Locus Medius, Locus Piorum, Limbus Patrum) is the symbolic localization of the soul's condition after death, the intermediate state between death and the resurrection. It is the parabolic or visionary abode of the soul awaiting its reunion with the body before the Judgment. It is a subterranean region where the dead "await" the Coming of Christ and the Judgment Day.

The Particular Judgment is a doctrine which denies the existence of a Middle Place, and which holds that each individual is judged immediately after death and that the soul enters Heaven or Hell without the body and without the Day of Judgment. If there were two judgments of man's soul, the second would be purely ceremonial and of little importance. Yet the Bible, the Apostles' Creed and the Fathers never mention the first and stress the importance of the Last Judgment. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven . . . and the dead, who are in Christ, shall

rise first (mortui, qui in Christo sunt, resurgent primi)" (*I Thess. 4:16*). "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead (inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos)" (*Apostles' Creed*). The "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15), foretold by Christ and Daniel, is more than ceremonial. It supposes that the judgment is still to come.

The custom of praying for the dead originated from the belief in the Middle Place. As long as the soul has not been judged, one still can implore God's mercy. After the irrevocable Judgment of God, all prayers for the dead become useless. Therefore, the Funeral and Anniversary Masses continue to implore God that the soul may escape the Judgment of Wrath and Eternal Death.

The early church believed in a Hades as an Intermediate State, in the immediate Coming of Christ, and in the Kingdom of the Just here on earth. Consequently, it did not know the practice of canonizations of saints and of statue worship. It further believed that the soul (without a body) cannot burn by material fire. Any trial by fire, any purging by fire and any punishment by fire would have to take place on the Day of Judgment or thereafter. Consequently, it did not know of the existence of a pre-resurrectional Purgatory, nor the practice of praying souls out of Purgatory into Heaven. Some Fathers believed that Hades was a place of quietness and sleep for both the good and the bad; others held that the dead had a foretaste of things to come.

This concept of a "foretaste" led to dividing Hades into three regions. The saints were believed to have a foretaste of joy in a higher region, called Paradise; the "flame", which symbolized a foretaste of Hell, was placed in a lower region, called Tartarus; and the middle region became a place for the in-between. When the Roman Church in the late Middle Ages changed its eschatological views by changing



the "foretaste" of the saints into the actual glorification and full beatific vision of God, it had to change its terminology. Hades (Infernus) gradually became synonymous with Hell (Gehenna); Paradise gradually became Heaven (Coelum); Limbus gradually became a place for unbaptized children; and Purgatory became a new place for pre-resurrectional purging by fire.

St. Justin Martyr (d. 165?) knows nothing about the Roman Catholic Purgatorial system, but believes in the old Middle Place (*Migne, P.G. 6, 303, 358, 486*).

St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (d. 202?), in his books "Against Heresies" (bk 5, chapt. 31) explains that Christ stayed in Hades until He rose from the dead, "so we also are to await the divinely appointed time of our resurrection" (*Migne, P.G. 7, 1210*).

Commodianus (c. 240) in his "Instructions" (chapt. 44 & 45) explains the Middle Place, the First Resurrection, the Fire of the Judgment which will consume the whole earth except the place of the saints, and the creation of a New Earth. Chapter 44 is entitled "De Resurrectione Prima"; chapter 45: "De Die Judicii" (*Migne, P.L. 5, 235 & 236*).

Origen (d. 254), the first Father to write a systematic commentary on all the books of the Bible, was a pupil of St. Clement of Alexandria (d. 220), and like his teacher borrowed heavily from Platonism in matters of the hereafter. They believed in the Middle Place, but held that the fires of the Judgment and of Hell were purgative and not everlasting. We will quote them in our chapter on Purgatory.

St. Cyprian (d. 258), Bishop of Carthage, followed Tertullian, believed in a Middle Place, and offered oblations for the dead (*Migne, P.L. 4, 399*).

Lactantius (d. 330) believed in the Middle Place and in the Millennium. In his Divine Institutes (bk 7, chapt. 20), he describes the Last Judgment as follows: "After these

things Hades (Inferi) shall be opened and the dead shall rise again and shall be called before the Great Judgment of the same God" (*Migne, P.L. 6, 798*). The just, the ungodly and the sinner do not leave their seats in Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, but still unjudged they walk out of the Gates of Hades (portae Inferi; see Matt. 16:18) to meet their King and Judge.

The Asian scholar, Aphraates (Aphrahat, 4th cent.) wrote his "Demonstrations" after the founding of the Ecumenical Church in about 337 A.D. (*Patrologia Syrica; Paris, 1894, vol. 1*). He teaches that there is only one Region of the dead where all souls sleep and await the judgment. He divides the dead into three groups: (1) the Just, a chosen few who need no judgment and who will enter Paradise after the resurrection (that means: no beatific vision); (2) the unbeliever or ungodly who need no judgment and who will enter into Hell; (3) the Sinner (evidently the great majority who committed sin after Baptism) shall be judged and be separated into two groups: those on the right shall enter Paradise, those on the left shall enter the Place of Torments. Until the day of resurrection, Hades will remain a sleeping and waiting place for all the dead. Basing his arguments mainly on the Psalms (1:5; 6:5; 36:10; 115:17; 143:2), he writes: "Our faith teaches that men, once fallen into this sleep, are so insensible that they do not know good from evil (bonum a malo non discernant). The Just do not experience their promised reward (nec justos promissam retributionem excipere), nor do the Wicked experience their due punishment, until the Judge comes and shall set men on his right hand or on the left" (*Aphraates, Demonstrations 8:20; Patrologia Syriaca, vol. 1, p. 398*).

In the fourth century, Heaven and Hell were still believed to be empty, except for God's faithful and fallen Angels. "From all these things you learn," writes Aphraates, "that

until now no one has yet received his reward: for the Just have not yet entered the Kingdom, nor have the Wicked gone into Torments" (*Dem.* 8:22).

According to Pseudo-Aphraates (5th cent.), Hell is a place of torments where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (souls have no teeth), while Paradise is a garden of pleasure with some sort of California climate: "The air in this region is delightful and pure (*amoenus et serenus*), and its light is brilliant, radiant and pleasant. There are planted beautiful trees whose fruits never fail and whose leaves never fall. Their foliage is bountiful and their fragrance very sweet" (*Dem.* 22:26; *Patrol. Syriaca*, vol. 1, p. 1014-1015). This fifth-century author knows of no pre-resurrectional releases from the Middle Place, yet he assures us that his eschatological views are "the tenets of the entire church (*mentem totius ecclesiae*)" (*Dem.* 22:26; *Patrol. Syriaca*, vol. 1, p. 1042-1046).

St. Hilary (d. 368), Bishop of Poitiers, believed in the Middle Place and interpreted the biblical parables and visions literally. He speaks of the descent into Hades (*ad Inferos*), the depth of the Abyss (*Abyssum*), the terrors of Hell (*Gehennae*) and the raptures of Paradise (*Paradisum*) (*Hilary, On the Trinity*, Bk 10, chapt. 34; *Migne, P.L.* 10, 370). In his Commentary on the Psalms (1:5; 58:10) he maintains that neither the faithful nor the unbeliever needs the judgment, because immediately after death the ungodly is delivered to the punishment of fire in the Lower World, and the saint passes from death to life in Paradise. But the baptized Sinner, a mixture of good and evil, is in need of the Last Judgment (*Migne, P.L.* 9, 259, 260, 371, 373). The sinner does not go to a purgatory, but has to wait in Hades for the Judgment Day. The saint does not enter Heaven (*coelum*), but awaits the resurrection in Paradise. Both saint and sinner need to be purified to escape the severity of the judgment, Mary, the Virgin of God, not excluded (in *judicii*

*severitatem capax illa Dei virgo*) (*Hilary on Ps. 119* [118], verse 17, art. 12; *Migne, P.L.* 9, 523).

The Eastern Rituals of worship, i.e. the Greek "Liturgies" of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Constantinople, originated in the 4th century (after the founding of the Catholic Church, A.D. 325), but their present form is not older than the 5th century. We will quote them under the names of the Fathers to whom they are attributed.

St. Basil (d. 379), Bishop of Caesarea, in his "Liturgy" has the following Commemoration of the dead: "Memento etiam, Domine . . . Be mindful also, O Lord, of all those of the priesthood and the laity who have fallen asleep and are resting. Deign, O Lord, to grant to all these souls rest in the Bosom of Holy Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*in sinu sanctorum Abrahae*). Lead them into the green place beyond the waters of refreshment, into the Paradise of Pleasure (*in paradisum voluptatis*), in the place where there is no sadness of heart, grief and moaning, in the light of Thy holy ones" (*Migne, P.G.* 31, 1672). We see, then, that according to the oldest Catholic rituals Hades is divided into a region of sadness and a region of light. The latter is identified with the "Bosom of Abraham" and with "Paradise", but not with Heaven. The souls of the saints enjoy "rest", but not the full beatific vision. The Church prays "for" the saints, not "to" the saints.

St. Cyril (d. 386), Archbishop of the Mother Church of Jerusalem, and Doctor of the Church, is famous for his Catechetical Lectures or instructions for the catechumenate. In his 23rd Catechesis, *Mystagogic* 5, Art. 9 we find the oration for the dead with an interpolation which is not found in other liturgies of this era: "Postea recordamur . . . Further we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep: First the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs (that God may accept our prayers with their supplications and



requests). Secondly we pray also for the departed Holy Fathers and Bishops, and in general for all others among us who have departed from this life" (*Migne, P.G. 33, 1115*). From his other catechetical lectures on Heaven, Hell, Hades, Paradise, the Judgment and the Resurrection of the flesh (*Cat. 3:5; 4:11; 14:19; 15:19 & 26; 18:19*) we learn that his Heaven is for God and His Angels, Hell for the fallen Angels, Paradise for the O.T. Patriarchs and N.T. Martyrs, Hades for the dead. There is no eternal bliss or eternal doom till after the Judgment (*Migne, P.G. 33, 895, 907, 1039*).

St. Gregory (d. 386), Bishop of Nyssa, followed the Platonic views of Origen, as we shall see in our chapter on Purgatory.

St. Gregory of Nazianzen (d. 391), Patriarch of Constantinople, President of the Second Ecumenical Council (381), known as "the Great" and as "the Theologian", also followed Gregory of Nyssa, Origen and Plato. He believed in the Middle Place, divided into three regions, of which the highest is called "Paradise". In his liturgical prayers for the dead (Oration 7, chapt. 17) he prays for the "sacred and holy soul . . . that thou mayest enjoy such a repose as is allotted in the Bosom of Abraham (in sinu Abrahae)" (*Migne, P.G. 35, 776*). Though the text has undergone some dogmatic changes, it is still clear that the fourth-century Ecumenical Church had nothing better to offer to even the most sacred soul than the Bosom of Abraham where the saints were awaiting the resurrection. The full beatific vision could not be enjoyed by the soul until it was united again with the body.

The Apostolic Constitutions, a fourth-century forgery of the Ecumenical Church, has a fifth-century Greek Ritual intended to be a model for the whole Christian Church. In its Oration for the Dead (*A.C. bk 8, chapt. 41*) we find the following prayer for the faithful departed: "Let us pray for our brethern who have found rest in Christ (qui in Christo

requieverunt) that God . . . may place him in the Region of the Just (in regione piorum), who are sleeping in the Bosom of Abraham (quiescentium in sinu Abrahami) . . . where there is no grief, sorrow and moaning (ubi non est tristitia, dolor, gemitus), but the Peaceful Abode of the godly (imo locus piorum sedatus) and the quiet land of the Just (quieta terra rectorum)" (*Migne, P.L. 1, 1143*). The souls of the just sleep in the Limbo of the Fathers, because they cannot see God face to face.

In the West we find the same Middle Place in the writings of St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine and other Fathers. St. Ambrose (d. 397), Bishop of Milan, Italy, in his Commentary on I Cor. 3:13 (*Migne, P.L. 17, 211*) or in his funeral orations for Emperors Valentinian and Theodosius (*Migne, P.L. 16, 1417 & 1447*), is totally unfamiliar with the Roman views of today. The African Councils of 418 and 419, according to the oldest manuscripts (*not in Mansi 4, 402; nor in Migne, P.L. 67, 217*) speak of the Middle Place ("Medius Locus") and its various mansions or regions. St. Ambrose still preached the Millennium, but St. Augustine began to doubt whether the just would reign on earth for a thousand years.

St. Augustine (d. 430), Bishop of Hippo, Africa, was instructed in the doctrine of the Millennium by St. Ambrose, but in his later years he disowned this four century old tradition (*City of God, bk 20, chapt. 7; Migne, P.L. 41, 666*). He did not believe in a Particular Judgment, nor in a Purgatory, nor in the full beatific vision of the just after death. He believed in the Middle Place and in the Immediate Coming of the Lord. As long as the early Christians believed that the Coming of Christ was at hand (*Matt. 10:7; Rom. 13:12; I Peter 4:7*), they were little concerned about beatific visions of the dead (*Migne, P.L. 33, 601*). Augustine believed that there was no punishment of Hell nor a reward in Heaven

as long as the soul (without body) was waiting in Hades. There are some "pains" and "torments" in Hades, but the just are far removed from that place (*City of God*, bk 20, Chapt. 15; *Migne*, P.L. 41, 681).

St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), Doctor of the Church, in his "Liturgy" has the following Commemoration of the dead: "Memento etiam . . . Be mindful also of all the saints who have pleased Thee in this world: the holy Fathers, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Preachers and all the spirits of the Just who were perfect in the faith, especially the holy, most glorious bearer of God, ever virgin, pure and undefiled, Holy Mary" (*Migne*, P.G. 77, 1295). Though Father Migne is dubious about the authenticity of the present text, it still shows that the Church prayed "for" the saints, not "to" them. As in the Ritual of St. Basil, the Egyptian Church speaks of the Middle Place as Hades and Paradise.

Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604) believed in the immediate Coming of the Lord; he believed in the Middle Place where the Just await the resurrection of the body; he knew only one Judgment, the Last Judgment. He claimed that in the same condition wherein a person departs from this world in the same condition he is presented on the Judgment Day (*qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in iudicio praesentatur*; *Migne*, P.L. 77, 396). Like the Greek Fathers, he believed that only martyrs and a few privileged saints (Mary and the apostles) enter Paradise or even Heaven, all others stay in Hades. He did not preach the assumption of Mary into heaven, which Gaul had just introduced during his episcopate. The Roman Church, from pope to peasant, confessed that it did not know what happened to the saints from the time of their death till the day of resurrection. This pope answered the question: "Are the souls of the Just received into Heaven before the restitution of the body? This we can neither confirm nor

deny about all the Just" (*Si ante resitutionem corporis recipiantur in coelo animae iustorum? Hoc neque de omnibus iustis fateri possumus, neque de omnibus negare*; *Migne*, P.L. 77, 356). Hence the pope himself confessed that he did not know whether the just enter heaven before the Judgment. Some saints may enjoy the beatific vision immediately after death, while all other saints have to wait with the souls of the sinners for the resurrection of the body.

Up to the 7th century only Martyrs (beginning with John the Baptist) were believed to enjoy immediate glorification. As the Fathers differed greatly about the place of their glorification (some speak of Paradise as a subdivision of the subterranean Hades, others speak of Paradise as a synonym for heaven), and as the patristic writings have been re-edited throughout the centuries, it is impossible to date the exact time when the entire church officially began to teach that the Martyrs had entered the habitation of God Himself (*coelum*).

After 604 A.D. Rome adopted the French Assumption of Mary. In 610 Pope Boniface dedicated the pagan Pantheon to "Mary and all the Martyrs", thereby snubbing all the saints of the Middle Place. All Martyrs Day was celebrated five centuries before All Saints Day. "The Pantheon", explains the Catholic Encyclopedia, "was consecrated by the pope to the Virgin Mary and all the Martyrs" (*C.E.* 2, 661; 1, 315). "At first only martyrs and St. John the Baptist were honoured by a special day. Other Saints were added gradually, and increased in number when the regular process of canonization was established" (*C.E.* 1, 315).

The Gelasian Sacramentary, an 8th-century ritual of Rome, offers the following prayer for the dead: "Receive Thou, O Lord, the spirit of Thy servant . . . in the Peaceful Place of Thy saints in order that it may escape the Penal Place, the fire of Hell, and the Flame of Tartarus in the Region of the



living" (Tu nobis, Domine, . . . spiritum etiam famuli tui . . . in pace sanctorum tuorum, uti Locum Poenalem, et Gehennae Ignem, Flammamque Tartari in regione viventium evadat; *Migne, P.L. 74, 1232*).

John of Damascus (d. 786?) gives us the details of the Eastern beliefs of the 8th century. In his treatise "On the Orthodox Faith" he follows St. Basil and he informs us that there are seven heavens (septem coeli orbes), that is, seven zones or regions ("On Heaven", bk 2, chapt. 6; *Migne, P.G. 94, 882*). Hades is located inside the earth, because Christ's soul descended into Hades (ad Inferos). Before the death of Christ the saints of Hades were groping in darkness and were sitting in the shadow of death (in tenebris et umbra mortis sedebant), but since then the region of the saints has been illuminated (illuceret) ("On the Descent to Hades," bk 3, chapt. 29; *Migne, P.G. 94, 1102*). God has planted a divine Paradise (divinus paradisus) for Adam, but he was banned from this kingdom. Paradise offers a blessed life overflowing with every pleasure and happiness ("On Paradise", bk 2, chapt. 11; *Migne, P.G. 94, 911 & 914*). In his chapter "On the Resurrection" (bk 4, chapt. 27) he offers nothing new (*Migne, P.G. 94, 1219*).

Bishop Liutprand (c. 970), famous historian, relates in detail how Pope Stephen VII in 897 dug up the body of Pope Formosus, placed the dead pope on the papal chair, called a Roman Council and excommunicated Formosus. They tore off his papal robes, cut off his fingers, and finally threw his body into the Tiber (*Antapodosis, bk 1, Art. 50; Migne, P.L. 136, 852*). A year later (898) Pope John IX annulled the anathema, restored the church membership to the defunct Formosus, and gave him a second 'Christian' burial. Seven years later (905) Pope Sergius once more dug up the hated Formosus and once more anathematized him. As cursing is the opposite of blessing, an anathema was con-

sidered the opposite of canonization. The excommunication of the dead by a council was a solemn declaration that such a person had died outside the pale of the church. The anti-Formosus faction which was fighting for the possession of the Papal States, wanted Formosus to appear on the Judgment Day without church membership (which might be quite embarrassing for a pope). We are not interested here in the personalities of these fighting king-popes, but in their eschatological thinking. They would never have committed all these papal atrocities if they had believed that Pope Formosus in a previous century had already appeared before a private Tribunal of God. As long as the Middle Place existed in the minds of the medieval popes, papal anathemas of the dead remained a common practice. Pope Innocent III (d. 1216) dug up the body of heretic Otto, and as late as the 15th century the papacy violated the remains of heretic Wycliff (d. 1384).

St. Odilo (d. 1048), Abbot of Cluny, in about 1040 A.D. set aside a special day for the "Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed" (*Odilo, Statutum de Defunctis; Migne, P.L. 142, 1037*). This day was instituted, not for the purpose of praying "poor" souls and sinners "out" of Hades or Purgatory, but to commemorate the "faithful", the elect, the saints, the just who had fallen asleep. It did not commemorate the martyrs and canonized saints, who by the 11th century were believed to inhabit the Heaven of God, but the souls of the faithful who were still waiting in the Middle Place. This feast was not instituted by a pope, but by a monk for the use of monks only. Only the Cluniacs and a few other Benedictine groups of the 11th century adopted the novelty. In the 12th century the Carthusians adopted it. As the Western monasteries and dioceses had no uniform or standard rituals, the occasion was observed on various dates. The Germans observed it on October 1st. "Bishop



Otricus (1120-25) introduced it into Milan for the 15 October" (*C.E.* 1, 316). Rome was slow to adopt it.

By the middle of the 11th century (1054) the rituals contain two Votive Masses: "The Mass in honor of All the Saints" (*Migne, P.L.* 151, 857 & 899), and "The Mass for All the Departed" (*Migne, P.L.* 151, 872). The word "All" (*omnium sanctorum, omnium defunctorum*) is so significant, because the Greek and Roman "Pantheon" were erected in honor "of all the gods", *Panton theon, Omnium deorum*. In the 7th century the Bishop of Rome changed the pagan temple "of all the gods" (*Pantontheon*) into the basilica of All Martyrs (*Panton marturon; Omnium Martyrum*). Pope Hildebrand in the 11th century created the Feast of All the Saints (*Panton hagion; omnium sanctorum*). Only the name of the feast was changed. The liturgy remained that of the Martyrs. Even the modern liturgy of November 1st (All Saints Day) is the liturgy of the old Martyrs. The hymn of the Mass (Nov. 1st) still reveals the change made by Hildebrand. At first only Martyrs were venerated as intercessors. Hildebrand increased the number of celestial saints of the New Testament by listing the following groups: the Virgin, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins and the Hermits. From this period on a few canonized saints (*non-martyrs; non-virgins*) are included among the saints in Heaven, while the uncanonized "faithful" and "just" still sleep in the Middle Place.

At the beginning of the Roman Catholic era (11th cent.) the eschatological terminology was changed. The Western Hades (*Infernus*) disappears and the name "Inferno" becomes gradually synonymous with Hell (*Gehenna*). Heaven (*coelum*), the abode of the Martyrs, and Paradise (*Paradisus*), the abode of the just, become gradually amalgamated into a new Italian "Paradiso" (Heaven). Blessed Peter, to whom allegedly were given the Keys of Hades (*claves portae In-*

feri; Matt. 16:18), now receives the keys of Heaven and becomes its gatekeeper (*janitor coeli*). St. Michael, whom the early church had placed before the gate of paradise, gradually lost his job in the underworld and was placed at the right side of the altar of incense. For the next three centuries not only the terminology is very confusing, but the West had no standard or dogmatic teaching about life after death. St. Peter Damian (d. 1072), for example, speaks "About a Monk who was condemned to Hell, but afterwards saved" (*De monacho qui damnatus in Inferno, postea liberatus est; Migne, P.L.* 145, 429). The word "condemned" indicates that his Inferno is no longer Hades, but his new Hell does not seem to be everlasting. The same confusion of terms and thoughts are found in the Cemetery Indulgence of Pope Callistus II (1121) (*Migne, P.L.* 163, 1227).

St. Ives (d. 1114), Bishop of Chartres, famous Roman Catholic theologian, in his *Decretum* (Part 16, chapt. 62) discusses at length the question whether the excommunicated can be saved, whether a sinner can be anathematized after death, and whether the unjustly condemned souls can be restored to the Church after death (*Migne, P.L.* 161, 838 & 840). Most of his arguments would be senseless if the doctrine of a Particular Judgment had been known. St. Bruno (d. 1123), Bishop of Segni and Abbot of Monte Cassino, in his *Books of Sentences* has nothing new to say about the hereafter, and his small article "On Paradise" reveals that his church had nothing defined on the subject.

Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141) and Pseudo-Hugo (c. 1200), still believed in a Middle Place (*Medius Locus*). The place of the Martyrs and canonized Saints is called Heaven (*Coelum*), the place of the Wicked is now called Hell (*Infernus*, instead of *Gehenna*), and the Middle Place, which contains both the non-canonized Just and the small sinners, is called *Medius Locus*. The extreme Just and the Wicked no longer



have a foretaste of Heaven and Hell, but actually are in Heaven and Hell before the Judgment. Heaven, Hell and the Middle Place are not "conditions" or "states", but real "places". "Hell is the place of torments, Heaven is the place of joy (*Infernus locus tormentorum est. Coelum locus est gaudiorum*) . . . The greatest torments are in the Lowest Place (in *Infimo*); the greatest joys are in the Highest Place (in *Summo*); and the moderate joys and sorrows are in the Middle Place (in *Medio*), that is, they are mixed in this region" (*Migne, P.L. 176, 586*). Hugo knows only three regions, but four groups. As the Middle Place houses both the just and the sinner, and as there are no pre-resurrectional releases from the Middle Place, it follows that Hugo was not familiar with either the doctrine of a Particular Judgment or the doctrine of Purgatory. Like St. Bernard (d. 1153), Hugo followed the Augustinian view of the "Last Judgment".

Peter Lombard (d. 1164?), whose Books of Sentences remained the official textbook of all 13th-century scholars, explained Psalm 37:10 ("For yet a little while and the Wicked shall not be") by saying that the just do not go to heaven immediately. Though Lombard has been quoted here by no one less than Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), Father Migne has a slightly different text which still says that the soul is not immediately admitted to the place "where the saints are" (*Migne, P.L. 191, 370*).

At the time that St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure began their theological studies, Pope Innocent IV (1243) tried to introduce a new name for the Middle Place ("Purgatorium"; *Mansi 23, 582*). As we shall see under *Purgatory*, the East rejected the new name and the West ignored it. Pseudo-Thomas refers to a "Purgatory", but Thomas himself ignored the term. Knowing the methodical and logical mind of Thomas, we would have expected Thomas to say: There are three places after death: Heaven, Hell and Purga-

tory. Instead, he argues at length about the Bosom of Abraham and poses the following questions: "Whether the Limbo of Hell is the same as Abraham's Bosom?" Yes. "Whether Limbo is the same as the Hell of the damned?" No. "Whether the Limbo of children is the same as the Limbo of the Fathers?" Yes and No: the children are kept in a lower region (*Aquinas, Summa, Supplement to Part III, "On the Resurrection", Question 69, Art. 4-6*).

We learn from the pronouncements of William of Augverne (d. 1249), Bishop of Paris and Master of theology at the University of Paris, that as early as 1243 Paris began to discuss the matter of the Beatific Vision. For one hundred years the French theologians sought a change in eschatological views, but without much success. Neither the popes of the 13th century, nor the Italian theologians, like Thomas and Bonaventure (though they studied at the University of Paris), expounded the modern views.

It was not until 1334 that Rome introduced the doctrine of the Beatific Vision of the Saints and of the Just. Since the 14th century the Just, formerly believed to be awaiting the Judgment in Hades, the Bosom of Abraham or Paradise, are said to share the full beatific vision along with the Martyrs and the canonized Saints. This new doctrine gradually abolished Hades altogether. Instead of the old Middle Place wherein the good and the bad experienced only a "foretaste" of things to come, the just now begin to share in the full glorification immediately after death, while the smaller sinners are immediately subjected to the purging fires of the hereafter. Thus the new doctrine of the Beatific Vision gradually abolished the Middle Place, and created the doctrines of a Particular Judgment and of Purgatory in its stead.

The doctrine of the Beatific Vision of the Just was unknown to all early Fathers who preached the Millennium



or the Reign of the Just here on earth. St. Augustine (d. 430), who wrote a book "On seeing God" (*Migne, P.L. 31, 601*), believed in the Middle Place where the just are awaiting the Coming of the Lord (*P.L. 41, 681*). Augustine held that the bliss or pains experienced by the souls in Hades are not corporeal, and that the full vision of God can only be enjoyed after the soul has been reunited with the body (*Augustine, De Musica, bk 6, chapt. 5; De Genesi ad Litteram, chapt. 32; Migne, P.L. 32, 1168; 34, 480*). Pseudo-Thomas Aquinas only admits that after the resurrection the blessed will see God face to face (*Supplement to Part III, Qu. 92, Art. 2*), while Thomas himself seems to have been interested only in the Bosom of Abraham and other regions of Hades. St. Bonaventure (d. 1274) taught that the martyrs and canonized saints see God in Heaven, but the just are still awaiting the appointed time of the resurrection (*see his mutilated Breviloquium VII, 5, 7; the spurious Centiloquium III, 50; and other writings*). The Catholic Encyclopedia apologizes for the heresies of St. Bonaventure and explains that he "occasionally put forward opinions not strictly correct in regard to questions not yet defined" (*C.E. 2, 851*). One wonders what good an infallible papacy serves when as late as the 13th century it still has refused to define the most simple question of salvation (what are we saved from and when?) and allows such immortal scholars as Thomas and Bonaventure to contaminate the church with their alleged heresies?

Pope Urban IV (d. 1264), in promoting the Feast of All Saints (Nov. 1st), admitted that there might be in Heaven some Saints who are neither martyrs nor canonized. These "unknown" saints, for whom the ritual had no special feast-day, were honored *en masse* on November 1st. This calls to mind the Pantheon in Athens which in the days of Paul (*Acts 17:16*) honored all the gods. To escape the wrath of

some god whom they might have overlooked, the pagans dedicated one altar "To the unknown god" (*agnostoi theoi*). When the Greeks accused Paul of preaching a foreign religion, he declared that he was merely preaching the one God which they had overlooked. The Feast of All Saints also has dedicated an altar to the Unknown Saint. "All Saints," explains the Catholic Encyclopedia, was "instituted to honour all the saints, known and unknown, and, according to Urban IV, to supply any deficiencies in the faithful's celebration of saints' feasts during the year" (*C.E. 1, 315*).

Pope Boniface VIII (d. 1303) told his friends that there was no life after death and a Western Council, convoked by Clement V, found Boniface guilty of atheism and condemned him (*Pierre Dupuy, Preuves de l'histoire du differend, Paris, 1655*). The hierarchy in the West was so corrupt that most bishops were only interested in this life on earth. The General Council of Vienne (1311) and those of London, York, etc., are only interested in the Templars and have nothing to contribute to the question of the beatific vision (*Mansi 25, 367f.*). The Council of Ravenna (1311) is concerned about special garbs to be worn by the Jews (canon 23), but is not interested in the souls of the faithful departed (*Mansi 25, 462*).

Dante (d. 1321) divides his "Divine Comedy" into Paradiso, Inferno and Purgatorio. His "Purgatory" is the peaceful abode of the dead. The names for the good and bad regions of Hades (*Infernus et Paradisus*) are now substituted for *Coelum et Gehenna*. The modern Italian word "Cielo" is still used, often denoting the sky. Today the medieval word "Limbo" denotes the abode for unbaptized babies who enjoy the pleasures of paradise, but are deprived of the beatific vision of God.

As late as 1331 Pope John XXII preached a series of sermons wherein he still upholds the eschatological views of his



predecessors, namely, that the souls of the just, though they have a foretaste of heaven, do not see God face to face before the resurrection of their bodies. In that same year (1331) the Inquisition dragged before its tribunal the British monk, Thomas Walleys, O.P., for daring to teach the full beatific vision of the saints prior to the resurrection. At this period of the 14th century the modern doctrine of the beatific vision was still a heresy, opposed by pope and inquisition alike.

Pope John XXII had made a special study of eschatology. He was an expert on the subject long before he was elected pope. His views could not have been considered heretical at the time, unless one holds that the Cardinals elected a known heretic to the papacy. One must realize that Pope John merely upheld the traditional view of the West, the view of Dante, of the Italian people, and of the scholars of the Eastern Church. The Orthodox Church still believes in an Intermediate State and teaches that "only the martyrs and some classes of saints are admitted at once" (*C.E.* 8, 551).

Catholic Professor, Father John Alzog, explains: "John XXII had expressed the opinion, much in favor of the Eastern Church, that the departed souls would not enjoy the intuitive vision of God until after the general judgment and resurrection of the body" (*Alzog, History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 835). The Catholic Encyclopedia informs us that Pope John, before his election, publicly taught "that the souls of the blessed departed do not see God until after the Last Judgment . . . After becoming pope he advanced the same teachings in his sermons" (*C.E.* 8, 433).

The University of Paris politically disliked Pope John XXII and for that reason promoted on Jan. 3, 1333 the doctrine of the Beatific Vision. The Franciscan monk, Dr. Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1340), professor at Paris, and the whole Franciscan Order began to press for the dogmatization of the Beatific Vision in order to embarrass the pope and to effect his de-

thronement (*see C.E.* 41, 63; *Hist. of Dogma*, I, 63). The University of Paris demanded from the pope an answer, black on white, "whether the souls of the saints who are in heaven, see the divine essence face to face before the resurrection of their bodies" (*Edmond Martène, Thesaurus*, vol. 1, p. 1383). As Pontiff he answered "No", and sought the aid of King Philip IV (Nov., 1333) to suppress the French heresy.

In 1334 the Franciscans succeeded in driving Pope John out of Rome and the French Cistercian monk, Benedict XII (1334-1342) was elected pope in his place. The new pope naturally had to accept the Franciscan view. In his Bull "Benedictus Deus" (A.D. 1334 or 1336) he decreed that souls, after being sufficiently purged, share in the Beatific Vision (*Mansi* 25, 985; *Denzinger* No. 469 or 530).

The Catholic Encyclopedia confesses that for 1300 years the Western Church believed in a Middle Place: "Some of the early Fathers, misled by Millennarian errors, believed that the essential beatitude of Heaven is not enjoyed until the end of time. They supposed that . . . the souls of the just dwell happily in a delightful abode, awaiting their final glorification. This was apparently the opinion of St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Ambrose . . . Some of the Fathers contended that these souls do not suffer the torment of fire until reunited with their bodies in the resurrection . . . A number of theologians maintained the opinion that until the resurrection the just do not enjoy the intuitive or facial vision of God . . . Pope John XXII (1316-1334) at Avignon, as a private theologian, seems to have supported this view . . . Until the question was settled by the decision of Benedict XII in 1334, there was much uncertainty regarding the fate of the departed in the period between death and the general resurrection" (*C.E.* 8, 551).

Here we have the admission that till the fourteenth century

the Roman papacy was uncertain as to what happened to souls from the time of death to the time of the resurrection of the body. Before the 14th century Rome believed that the souls slept in Hades, the Bosom of Abraham, the Middle Place, the Limbo of the Fathers, Paradise, etc.; after the 14th century Hades is transformed into a temporary place of fire (Purgatorio) for sinners and an everlasting place of fire for the wicked (Inferno). Like the canonized saints, the souls of the just now go immediately to heaven (Paradiso). If the papacy erred in its eschatological views up to the 14th century, it follows that the Italian scholars of the 13th century (Thomas, Bonaventure, etc.) did not contribute much to the science of the "Last Things". It is for this reason that all 13th-century Summas have been falsified.

After the 14th century the custom of canonizing saints becomes of less importance. The West now begins to speak of the "superabundant" merits and satisfactions of the saints, which become automatically the property of the Vatican and which the pope can dispense in return for material favors. In 1343 Pope Clement VI in his Bull "Unigenitus Dei Filius" (Denzinger No. 550) made the Treasure Chest of the Church (Thesaurum Ecclesiae) a dogma of faith. In 1439 Pope Eugene IV at the Council of Florence made the existence of Purgatory a doctrine of the Western Church, while the East rejected it. In 1476 Pope Sixtus IV is the first pope to dogmatize the application of the Treasury of Indulgences to the souls in Purgatory (Bull "Salvator noster"; Denzinger No. 3082). Thus seven years before the birth of Martin Luther (1483-1546) Catholics began to gain indulgences for the benefit of their deceased relatives and friends, a practice unknown in the East.

The emptying of the Middle Place before the Last Judgment created the necessity of a First or Particular Judgment immediately after death. The Particular Judgment necessari-

tated a place for cleansing fires prior to the resurrection of the body. We have already mentioned that the *Missale Romanum* does not know the doctrines of Purgatory and of a Particular Judgment, but pleads that God may have mercy on the souls at the time of the Last Day. The same medieval doctrines are found in all other Roman liturgies. The *Breviarium Romanum* repeats over and over: "Deliver their souls, O Lord, from the gate of Hades" (A porta Inferi. Erue, Domine, animas eorum). "Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that tremendous Day" (Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna in die illa tremenda) (*Pars Autumn.*, Nov. 2). The "office of the dead" in the *Rituale Romanum* reads: "Absolve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant X from every bond of sins, that he may be raised from the dead on the glorious day of the resurrection and may join again thy saints and elect" (Absolve, quaesimus, Domine, animam famuli tui N ab omni vinculo delectorum, ut in resurrectionis gloria inter Sanctos et electos tuos resuscitus respiret). Here the saints of Paradise and the just of Hades are not united till the day of resurrection.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PURGATORY

#### WAS PURGATORY KNOWN DURING THE FIRST THOUSAND YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY?

Due to Roman Catholic propaganda, many Protestant authors erroneously believe that the doctrine of Purgatory originated during the first three centuries and was made a dogma by Gregory the First in the year 600 A.D. The place "Purgatory" (Latin: *Purgatorium*; Greek: *Katharteron*) is mentioned neither in the Bible, nor by the Fathers of the Church. The Catechism of the Greek Orthodox Church teaches that such a place cannot be found in the Sacred Scriptures. Once we define our terms the historical development of purgatory is easy to follow.

The Roman Catholic Purgatory is a Place of Fire where the souls of lesser sinners are cleansed immediately after death. Once these souls have satisfied God for their sins, they are released from Purgatory and transplanted into Heaven before the resurrection of their bodies. Purgatory, therefore, can serve its purpose only from the time of death till the day of resurrection, after which it will cease to exist. It is a burning place for souls only, not for bodies. Before the resurrection souls may leave the fires of Purgatory if God answers the prayers and accepts the sufferings and sacrifices of their relatives, friends and priests. The suffering of the souls in Purgatory is a sentence imposed upon them by the Judge of the Particular Judgment. This divine sentence can be commuted by the pope and the priest by means of indulgences and Masses.

Those Fathers—who believed in a Middle Place (from the time of death till the day of resurrection), who believed in Two Resurrections and in the Millennium or Reign of the Just on earth after the First Resurrection, who believed in a peaceful abode for the just and prayed for the well-being of their saints, who believed in the immediate Coming of the Lord, who believed that the dead "sleep" till the coming of Christ, who held that material fire cannot burn souls when not clothed with their bodies, who held that all souls go to Hades: good and bad, who held that some souls in Hades may undergo some discipline and punishment (*paena*), but not a physical punishment such as caused by material fire, who believed in one judgment only, who were unacquainted with the Particular Judgment and with pre-resurrectional releases from Hades, and even those who denied that Hell is everlasting and who taught that the fires of the Judgment Day and the fires of Hell are cathartic and corrective—could not have believed in the Purgatory of the Roman Catholic Church. Since all Fathers believed in most of the above-mentioned doctrines, it follows that none of them believed in a Purgatory.

If Purgatory were mentioned in the Hebrew (O.T.) Bible, the Jews would believe in such a place. If it were mentioned in the Greek (N.T.) Bible, the Greeks would believe in it. Neither the Jews nor the Greek Orthodox Church at any time believed in a Purgatory. The Bible mentions Heaven and Hell hundreds of times, but it never mentions Purgatory. In our chapter on the Apocrypha (*Hist. of Dogma*, vol. I, p. 49-50) we explained that the Books of Maccabees are apocryphal, and that they refer only to praying for the dead (*II Macc. 12:46*). The prayers by the faithful for unjudged souls sleeping in Hades, and the actual burning of the dead after judgment are two things so different that they cannot be equated. We cannot take time out to examine every scrip-

tural text quoted by Roman theologians, because they have no bearing on the subject. God is not an evil legislator or shyster lawyer who would hide in small print a doctrine of such immense importance to salvation.

The word 'purgatorium' comes from the Latin verb: *purgare* (to purge, to purify, to clean) and means a place where souls are cleansed from their sins (compare: crematorium, auditorium, lavatory, laboratory, etc.). Etymologically the word "purgatory" no more refers to "fire" than the word "laundry". The word "Purgatorium" (Purgatorio, Purgatoire, Purgatory) is of Roman Catholic origin, and was not used before the 13th century. It designates a specific place for purging sins prior to the resurrection. The phrase "Ignis purgatorialis" or "Ignis purgatorius" is of pagan origin and means "Cleansing fire" (Fegefeuer, Vagevuur). This expression is used by several fathers and refers to a fire on the day or after the day of judgment. Hence there is a great difference between *Purgatorium* and *Ignis purgatorialis*. The first exists before the resurrection, the latter after the resurrection; the first refers to a place without referring to fire, the latter to fire, but not to a place; *purgatorium* is a noun, *purgatorius* is an adjective; the purgatorial fires of Hell have been condemned by the Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church (both East and West), the purgatorial fires of Purgatory are only a late Western belief.

*Purgatorialis* means purgative, cathartic, tending to purge, expiational, cleansing, and often refers to the fires of Hell. The adjective *purgatorius* is older than the noun *purgatorium*. Hence it is wrong or deceptive to translate "ignis purgatorialis" as "the fire of Purgatory". Some Fathers and medieval theologians speak of "paena purgatorialis" i.e. a certain punishment which cleanses the soul from sin. This expression does not refer to fire, and may not be translated as "the punishment of Purgatory". *Paena purgatorialis* often

refers to the penitential discipline of the early catechuminate. The N.T. Bible mentions "fire" 73 times. It mentions an "inextinguishable fire" (pur asbeston; *Matt.* 3:12), an "everlasting fire" (pur aionion; *Matt.* 18:8), a "consuming fire" (pur katanaliskon; *Heb.* 12:29), but it does not mention a "cleansing fire" (pur katharsion). The *cleansing fire* (ignis purgatorius) is of pagan origin, borrowed from Greek mythology, adopted from the Platonists.

St. Clement of Alexandria (d. 220), like some other Greek Fathers (Origen of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nyssa) believed in an Apokatastasis, that is, the restoration of all beings to their original state of innocence (see *C.E.* 1, 599). This is not the "Apokatastasis" mentioned in the Bible (*Acts* 3:21), but the doctrine of immortality according to the philosophy of Plato (d. 347 B.C.). According to Greek philosophy, the wicked and the fallen angels will return to their original state and will be set free. The fires of Hell are not everlasting, but temporal; not punitive, but corrective, remedial, i.e. restorative. Much of this Platonic doctrine we find in Clement's *Stromata* (bk 6 & 7; *Migne, P.G.* 9, 415 & 541). He believed that in the Lower Regions were diverse mansions for the purification of sinners: "In order that the believer through much discipline may purge himself of his faults, he passes to the greatest Torment, which place is better than the former Mansion (transit ad maximum supplicium quod est melius priori mansione), carrying with him the proper punishment for those sins which he committed after Baptism" (*Migne, P.G.* 9, 331). His is merely an attempt to christianize Greek philosophy.

Tertullian (d. 230), Bishop of Carthage and founder of Latin Christianity, believed that Hades (mentioned ten times in the Bible) is the Middle Place (Interim). He taught that "every soul is kept in custody in Hades until the Day of the Lord (omnem animam apud Inferos sequestrari in diem



Domini)" (*Tertullian, De Anima, chapt. 55; Migne, P.L. 2, 790*). His use of the legal term, "sequesterate", proves again that Tertullian had never heard of a Particular Judgment nor of a Purgatory. Neither Angel nor Devil knows which soul in Hades belongs to him, until so decided by trial on the Last Judgment Day. Tertullian's Hades is the same place into which Christ descended; therefore, it is not Purgatory.

In the 58th chapter of his treatise *On the Soul*, Tertullian repeats that all souls stay in Hades until the Day of resurrection, and he concludes: "As we understand this 'prison', of which the Gospel speaks (Matt. 5:25-26), to be Hades (Inferos), and as we interpret 'the uttermost farthing' to signify that even the smallest offence must be expiated there while awaiting the resurrection, no one will doubt that the soul in Hades (Inferos) makes some sort of recompense without detracting from the full punishment to come at the time of the resurrection to be suffered by the flesh also" (*Migne, P.L. 2, 796*). In the Roman Catholic Purgatory only the soul suffers, not the body. In the Hades of Tertullian the soul may have a foretaste of suffering, but the real punishment is still to come after the resurrection of the body. Hence Tertullian could not have believed in praying souls out of Hades by saying Masses or by gaining Indulgences. Whatever the soul is able to suffer incorporeally before the resurrection, the same must be suffered physically by the body after the resurrection. In his *Apology* he states: "And therefore the bodies too will appear, because the soul alone cannot suffer anything without a solid substance (sine stabili materia), that is, without the flesh" (*Tertullian, Apologeticus, chapt. 48; Migne, P.L. 1, 591*). In his *Testimony of the Soul* he explains once more that it is necessary for your "former substance" (substantiam pristinam) to return to the soul, because without the flesh "you can neither suffer punishment nor enjoy a reward (nihil mali ac boni sentire possis)" (*Ter-*

tullian, *De Testimonio Animae, chapt. 4; Migne, P.L. 1, 686-687*). If there existed any Latin or oral tradition about Purgatory, it is evident that the founder of Latin Christianity had never heard of it.

Origen (d. 254) borrowed his views from Platonism, and frankly admits it. In his "Peri Archon" (*De Principiis*) he explains that the fire of Hell is purgative, and for that reason he speaks of a "pur katharsion", a cleansing fire (*Migne, P.G. 11, 233, 236, 238*). He correctly explained that the trial by fire ("purosis" *I Peter 4:12*), that is, "the fire" (to pur) which shall try the deeds of man, whose virtues and shortcomings will be revealed in this fire (en puri), and which shall burn away the evil deeds of the sinner, while saving the sinner himself, as it were, by fire (dia puris) (*I Cor. 3:12-15*), shall not take place till the Day of Resurrection and Judgment. Therefore, it cannot refer to the pre-resurrectional Purgatory of the Roman Catholic Church. In his "Homilies on Jeremiah" (Hom. 16, Art. 5 & 6), he interprets *I Cor. 3:12-15* as follows: "Would you enter into the Holy Place (in sancta) with your wood, hay and stubble, thus defiling the Kingdom of God? Or would you stay outside on account of your wood, hay and stubble, thus receiving no reward at all for your gold, silver and precious stone? But this would not be right either. Therefore, it follows that because of the wood you will be committed to fire which will consume the wood, hay and stubble. For our God, for those who can understand heavenly things, is called a 'consuming fire' (ignis consumens; pur katanaliskon; Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29)" (*Migne, P.G. 13, 446*).

Origen's cleansing fire takes place after the resurrection. He does not refer to a Roman Catholic Purgatory, but to the cleansing fires of pagan mythology and Greek philosophy. As Origen's belief in an Apocatastasis and Purgative Fires is not biblical, his teachings were condemned in the



South by St. Augustine of Africa (*Migne, P.L. 41, 727*), and in the East by the sixth-century Council of Constantinople (*Mansi 9, 395-400*).

St. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368), as we have seen, maintains that even the Virgin of God has to appear before the Judgment (*Homily on Ps. 119, Gimel, verse 17, paragraph 12; Migne, P.L. 9, 523*). Father Migne disagrees with his fellow countryman, and explains that Mary did not contract sin and, therefore, she need not fear the Judgment.

St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. 386) in his books "On the Soul and the Resurrection" (*Migne, P.G. 46, 98-102*) and "On the dead" (*P.G. 46, 523*) follows the eschatological teachings of Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Plato. He speaks of a cleansing fire (*purgatorius ignis; Migne, P.G. 46, 99*), but it is that of Greek mythology. Both the fire of trial at the time of the resurrection and the fires of Hell after the judgment are purgative or remedial. Both the Wicked and the Fallen Angels shall be restored to their original state of innocence.

St. Gregory of Nazianzen (d. 391), Patriarch of Constantinople and President of the Second Ecumenical Council (381), followed the teachings of Gregory of Nyssa. In his "Poemata de Seipso" he speaks of a cleansing fire which shall reveal the deeds of man (*ignis purgatorius omnium opera dijudicabit*) (*Migne, P.G. 37, 1010*).

St. Augustine (d. 430) condemned the eschatological views of Origen and the Platonists, and taught that the fires of the hereafter are everlasting. In his *City of God* (*bk 21, chapt. 13*) he wrote an entire chapter "Against the opinion of those who think that the punishments of the wicked after death are administered for the purpose of purgation (*causa purgationis*)" (*Migne, P.L. 41, 727*). St. Augustine also held the view that an incorporeal soul is not capable of suffering from corporeal fire (*"De Musica", bk 6, chapt. 5; "De Genesi" chapt. 32; Migne, P.L. 32, 1168; 34, 480*). This

same view was held by Boetius (d. 525) (*Migne, P.L. 64, 1350*) and by other Fathers of this era. Yet St. Augustine speaks of "pains which the spirits of the dead suffer (*poenas, quas patiuntur spiritus mortuorum*)" (*Migne, P.L. 41, 738*). He held, therefore, the view of the Greek Orthodox Church of today.

Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604), as we have seen, believed in the immediate Coming of the Lord, in a Middle Place where the just await the resurrection of their body and their glorification, and in one judgment: the Last Judgment. In his Books of Dialogues (*bk 4, chapt. 39*) he writes: "Our Lord says in the Gospel: 'Walk while you have the light' (John 12:35), and by the Prophet He says: 'In time accepted have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee' (Isa. 49:8), which the Apostle Paul explains by saying: 'Behold, Now is the acceptable time; behold, Now is the day of salvation' (Nunc dies salutis; II Cor. 6:2). Solomon likewise says: 'Whatever thy hand is able to do, do it now: for there is no work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Hades (Sheol), whither thou art hastening' (Eccles. 9:10) . . . From these verses it is without doubt established that in the same condition wherein a person departs from this world, in the same condition he is presented on the Judgment Day (*ex quibus nimirum sententiis constat quia qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in iudicio praesentatur*)" (*Migne, P.L. 77, 396*). From his selection of Bible verses and from his conclusion it is clear that Pope Gregory did not believe in a Roman Catholic Purgatory. Yet the above is the Pope's answer to the question: "Is there a cleansing fire after death? (*An post mortem purgatorius ignis sit?*)" (*Migne, P.L. 77, 393*). We notice here that Gregory does not speak of a "Purgatorium", i.e. a place of fire for purging venial sins prior to the judgment, but he mentions the pagan "*purgatorius ignis*", i.e. some fire after death which



possesses the quality of cleansing sin. Constantinople and Africa had already condemned Origen for teaching a *pur katharsion*, and Gregory plainly teaches that there is no purging of sin by means of fire prior to the Last Judgment. Neither does the pope speak of punishment and guilt (*paena et culpa*), nor of Masses and Indulgences for the poor souls in Purgatory.

Right after this passage wherein Gregory denies that sins can be purged by fire between the time of death and the day of resurrection, we find a text which seems to be an interpolation. It is not a Roman Catholic interpolation, but a correction by later editors who hold the Augustinian view that some souls in Hades suffer punishment of a non-corporeal nature. This argument is supposedly based on Matthew (12:32) which says that the sin against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this age, nor in an age to come. Anyone understands that this is a rhetorical way of saying "never", and that one is not to deduct new teachings from pre-Christian, Greek colloquialisms. Pope Gregory would not have quoted the Bible at length in order to prove that the soul appears on the Last Judgment in the same state wherein he died, and at the same time quote the same Bible to prove that souls are purified immediately after death and enter heaven before the judgment. In any case, this contradictory text warns that "none can be purged there (in Hades), not even the smallest sins, unless by the good works performed here in this life, he already deserved to obtain such a favor in the next place (*nisi bonis hoc actibus in hac adhuc vita positus, ut illic obtineat, promereatur*)" (*Migne, P.L. 77, 396*). Hence the author had never heard of Masses and Indulgences, nor of the superabundant merits of the saints.

For those who believe that Pope Gregory made Purgatory a dogma, let us briefly examine his eschatological views. We have already mentioned that he did not believe in the full

beatific vision of the saints or the immediate glorification of all the just. In the same books of Dialogues, where some authors see a Purgatory, the question is asked where Heaven and where Hell are located, but Purgatory is not mentioned (*Migne, P.L. 77, 400*). The pope answers that question by stating that Hell is probably located on the island of Sicily where there are "certain gaping gulfs of torments casting out fire continually" (*Migne, P.L. 77, 380*). Right after this bit of wisdom, the pope dedicates a chapter on "Those souls which seem as it were to be taken out of their bodies by mistake" (p. 381). He tells us as Gospel truth the story of a man who had been restored to life because the Angel of Death had struck him by mistake. This story of an Angel missing his mark and killing the wrong fellow, was, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, a tale which Gregory had borrowed from a second-century Greek author (*C.E. 9, 130*). As this pope borrowed his material from Greek mythology, he is at once disqualified as an authority or guide in Christian eschatology. From Gregory the Great to the Final Schism (604-1054), Western theologians have little to say about the Last Things.

Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141) or Pseudo-Hugo (c. 1200) is the first Roman Catholic theologian to speak in more detail about the regions or places of the hereafter. According to the new Roman Catholic terminology the place of the saints is now called "Heaven" (*Coelum*) and the place of the damned is called "Hades" (*Infernus*). The Middle Place (*Medius Locus*) is a mixed region where the just enjoy moderate bliss, while the sinner suffers moderate sorrows (but not the pains of fire). In his *Summa* (bk 2, Part 16, *chapt. 4*) Hugo has a special chapter "On the places of punishments" (*De locis paenarum; Migne, P.L. 176, 586*). Temporal pains may be suffered either during this life or in the Middle Place, while eternal pains are suffered after the Judgment. After

having mentioned the pains of Hell, Hugo continues: "Now there is another punishment after death which is called purgative (est enim alia paena post mortem quae purgatoria dicitur) . . . Of what nature are the purgative punishments in this life, and of what nature in the hereafter? (Quales sunt purgatoriae paenae in hac vita et quales post?)" (*Migne, P.L. 176, 590*). We see, therefore, that "purgatoriae" is an adjective, not a noun; that purgative pains do not refer to fire, but may refer to any kind of suffering which expiates man's sin even before his death. Hence, it is wrong and deceptive to quote Hugo as speaking of the "punishment of Purgatory".

British Cardinal Robert Pulley (d. 1153?) in his Book of Sentences (*bk 4, chapt. 20-22*) speaks of the places of purification, but does not know where they are located. He has one chapter "On the Mansions and on the site of Hell" (*De mansionibus et situ Inferni*). Like all ancient writers who did not know their subject matter, Cardinal Pulley uses the form of dialogue and asks: "Where is the place of purging? In Hell or in Heaven? There is no tribulation in Heaven, nor correction in Hell. Then where are the penitents after death? In the places of purgation (in purgatoriis). Where are these places?" . . . etc. (*Migne, P.L. 186, 826*). The adjective "purgatorius" is now turning into a noun, but is used in its plural form: *in purgatoriis*. The name "purgatorium" is still unknown.

Richard of St. Victor in his Summa (A.D. 1173) has a treatise on the General Judgment and mentions a cleansing fire (ignis purgatorius), but like all others fails to describe or to define the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, because it is not yet an autonomous state or independent place like Heaven and Hell (*Migne, P.L. 196, 1177*).

Peter of Poitiers (d. 1215) in his Book of Sentences shows no more knowledge on the subject of the "Last Things" than

his predecessors, but merely repeats their warning: "It is certain that after death there is no place for penance (non est locus penitendi)" (*Migne, P.L. 211, 1009*).

Pope Innocent IV in 1243 changed the name of the Middle Place and became the first human being to employ the singular noun: "Purgatorium" i.e. a Place for purging, but the Eastern Church objected to the new name. Basing his arguments on the Greek colloquialism employed in Matt. 12:32 and on the post-resurrectional fire of trial mentioned in I Cor. 3:15, Pope Innocent IV introduced the name of "purgatory" when he wrote to Cardinal Otto: "Because they (the Greeks) say that a place for such a purgation has not been indicated to them by their Doctors by a fixed and special name, We decree that for the future it shall be known to them by this name (of Purgatory)" (*Innocent IV, Ep. 10, chapt. 23; Mansi 23, 582*). Thus, in the 13th century, during the lifetime of Thomas Aquinas, the Greek Church taught what it still teaches today, namely, that neither the Bible nor the Fathers ever used the term Purgatory.

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), as we have mentioned, did not accept the new name of Purgatory, but speaks at length about the Middle Place, which he calls the "Bosom of Abraham", the "Limbo of the Fathers" (check these terms in Attwater's Catholic Dictionary). Pseudo-Thomas added the word "Purgatory" to the Summa, and explains "we have a purgatory where souls are detained from receiving their reward at once" (*Summa, Supplement to Part III, Question 69, Art. 7*). Even Pseudo-Thomas has nothing to say about pre-resurrectional releases through the gaining of Indulgences. St. Albert the Great (d. 1280), the teacher of Thomas, avoided the new name "Purgatory", but asked the controversial question of this era: "Is there or is there not a purgative fire after death? (An ignis purgatorius sit vel non post mortem?)" (*Albertus Magnus, Dist. xxi, Art. 4; Opera Omnia, Paris,*



1890, vol. 29, p. 865). St. Albert's question is no more advanced than that of Gregory the Great (d. 604): "Is there a cleansing fire after death? (An post mortem purgatorius ignis sit?)" (*Migne, P.L.* 77, 393). They merely ask whether the fires in the hereafter have the power of cleansing sin.

Dante Alighieri (d. 1321) adopted the term "Purgatorio" in his *Divine Comedy*, but it is still the peaceful abode which formerly was called Hades or Paradise. His "Paradiso" is Heaven; his "Inferno" is Hell. His contemporary popes, like Nicholas III (1280), Boniface VIII (1303) and Clement V (1314) are placed in his Inferno (*Canto 19, verses 49-80*). His views are not a poetic license, but the common view of the people of 13th-century Italy.

Pope Benedict XII (1334) condemned the eschatological views of Pope John XXII and his predecessors, and decreed that souls after being sufficiently purged, share in the Beatific Vision (*Mansi* 25, 985; *Denzinger No.* 469 or 530). This is the very beginning of the modern eschatological views of the Roman Catholic Church, which gradually produced the purgatorial system of redeeming souls by Masses and Indulgences. The Catholic Encyclopedia comments: "Until the question was settled by the decision of Benedict XII in 1334, there was much uncertainty regarding the fate of the departed in the period between death and the general resurrection" (*C.E.* 8, 551). As the modern Purgatory covers the period between death and the resurrection, Roman scholars admit that up to the 14th century there was no Catholic teaching about the souls in Purgatory and their condition.

The "Dies Irae" hymn was added to the Funeral Mass in the 14th century, but it contains the old doctrine of Hades wherein the souls await with fear the Last Judgment. Like all the other liturgy for the dead, it fails to mention or to expound the doctrine of a Particular Judgment, a Purgatory, or even that of a cleansing fire (*ignis purgatorius*).

At the Ecumenical Council of Florence (1439) Rome for the first time officially established the doctrine of a "Cleansing Fire" for the Western Church ("Quaestio de igne purgatorio", *Mansi* 31A, 485; 31B, 1662). The Eastern Church officially rejected it. At a secret session the Latins tried to dogmatize the following points: (1) that there is a Purgatory, (2) that the souls of venial sinners are purged there by fire, (3) that the souls can be aided by Masses and alms, (4) that these souls can be liberated from that place before the Judgment. When the Eastern prelates at the council rejected this new doctrine, Rome bribed an Eastern prelate, Bessarion, and promised him a Western Cardinalate if he could persuade the East to accept the Western view. Bessarion was authorized to offer the Greeks the following compromise: the council would only define the existence of purgatory as a cleansing place, but the conciliar definition would purposely fail to state that the purgation is effected by fire. Thus it would seem to the world that an agreement had been reached, while actually the East could continue her belief in an Intermediate State where souls await the Judgment. The Catholic Encyclopedia explains: "At the Council of Florence, Bessarion argued against the existence of real purgatorial fire, and the Greeks were assured that the Roman Church had never issued any dogmatic decree on the subject" (*C.E.* 12, 578). The Eastern prelates were furious when they discovered that one of their own men tried to double-cross them.

St. Antoninus, O.P. (d. 1459), Archbishop of Florence and host to the ecumenical council, is the first Roman Catholic theologian to treat in his *Summa on Purgatory* ("De Purgatorio") as an official doctrine of the church. While he is still skeptical about indulgences, Antoninus quotes in his *Summa* from the Apocrypha (II Macc. 12:43) and concludes: "And therefore he who denies Purgatory, which the Universal Church holds . . ., is a heretic . . . And thus the

Jews and the Greeks are in error by denying Purgatory" (*Antoninus, Summa Theologica, Part I, Title 10, chap. 2; Veronae, 1740, vol. 1, p. 590*). Antoninus was forced to expound Purgatory as a defined doctrine, but he delights in informing his students: "About the place of Purgatory there is nothing expressly mentioned in the Scriptures, nor can it be validly determined by reason" (p. 591).

To refresh our memory, let us restate that in 1334 Pope Benedict XII made the Beatific Vision of the saints a dogma of faith; in 1343 Pope Clement VI applied the superabundant merits of the saints to man on earth by means of indulgences, thus officially establishing the Treasury of the Church; in 1439 the Council of Florence established Purgatory as a Western dogma; in 1476 Pope Sixtus IV officially established the doctrine that papal indulgences can be applied to the souls in Purgatory (*Bull "Savator noster", Aug. 3, 1476; Denzinger No. 3082*). Professor Henry Charles Lea (d. 1909) in his *History of Inquisition* relates that as early as 1443 Bishop Alonso of Avila, who was accused of opposing papal indulgences, was forced to make the following confession: "The pope can also absolve from all sins and can give a plenary indulgence, thus delivering man from the total punishment of Purgatory (*liberando homine a tota poena Purgatorii*)" (*Lea, Hist. of Inquisition, vol. 1, p. 43*). This is not an anachronism. It means that within four years after the Council of Florence the popes began to sell the pardons from the newly invented Purgatory to the faithful on earth (before their death). In 1476 (33 years later) the popes began to grant pardons to souls who were already in Purgatory; that is, the commuting of the divine sentence of the Particular Judgment.

The year 1439 is without doubt the period in which the papacy and the hierarchy of the West accepted the modern doctrine of purgatory. Authors, like Thomas à Kempis

(d. 1471), who borrowed their material from older sources still failed to present the teachings of today (*Imitation of Christ, bk 1, chap. 24*). The first books, entirely concerned with the subject of purgatory, do not appear until the 16th century. As with any other novelty, many frauds and miracles were employed to introduce Purgatory to the people of the West. St. Catherine of Genoa (d. 1510) wrote her "Treatise on Purgatory" (London, 1946) and informs us that by special miracle she tasted the pains of Purgatory while on earth. St. Thomas Moore (d. 1535) wrote "The Supplication of Souls" (Westminster, 1950). They are the very first authors on the subject, and subsequently were rewarded with sainthood for their dishonesty and heresy.

When Martin Luther (1483-1546) nailed his "Ninety-five Theses" (Oct. 31, 1517) on the chapel door of the University of Wittenberg, he did not bring up an old medieval doctrine, but wished to expose modern abuses and to debate the doctrine of purgatorial indulgences, which without conciliar authority had been introduced seven years before his birth. The German monk, John Tetzel (d. 1519), was vending purgatorial indulgences in Germany to raise funds for Rome. Luther's 27th thesis for discussion reads: "They preach man-made doctrines who say that the soul flies out of Purgatory as soon as the money jingles in the Chest." Similar discussions on purgatorial indulgences are theses 82 and 83.

After Luther's death, the Council of Trent condemned the reformer's doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*), made the doctrine of Purgatory a dogma of faith (*Session 6; Jan. 13, 1547, canons 9 & 30; Mansi 33, 40-43*), and dogmatized the practice of purgatorial indulgences (*Session 25; Dec. 1563; Mansi 33, 170 & 194*). As in the Council of Florence, the Council of Trent in its secret sessions instructed the hierarchy to continue to teach that Purgatory is a place of fire, but agreed to leave the word "fire" out of the con-



ciliar definition in order not to close the door entirely for further negotiations for union of East and West. "If anyone says that . . . to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such a way that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven can be opened to him: let him be anathema" (*Council of Trent, 1547; Mansi 33, 43*). No "fire" of any kind is mentioned. In order to silence the lower clergy and peasants, the same council ruled 16 years later: "The more difficult and subtle questions (*difficiliores ac subtiliores quaestiones*), however, and those which do not promote edification and from which there is for the most part no increase in piety, are to be excluded from popular instructions to uneducated people" (*Council of Trent, 1563; Mansi 33, 170*).

We have seen that the early Latin Fathers believed in a Middle Place, but not in a Purgatory. We have seen that the Greek Church throughout the centuries opposed and condemned the pagan or heretical belief in a *pur katharsion*, a cleansing fire. The Greek Orthodox Church of today still believes in an Intermediate State and denies the existence of purgatory. Its catechism reads: "Concerning Katharteron, purgatory? Nothing about this can be found in the Sacred Scriptures." The Protestant churches teach that the doctrine of Purgatory is unscriptural. The modern Roman Ritual contradicts the existence of a Purgatory.

St. Catherine of Genoa, and nearly all modern authors on Purgatory (Rev. F. H. Weninger, S. J.; Mrs. J. Sadler, etc.), claim that, according to the Doctors of the Church, the temperature and pains of the fires of Purgatory equal those of Hell. Thus in spite of the fact that the existence of purgatorial fire is not a dogma, and may not be discussed by the priests, the alleged saints continue to have their visions of

the gigantic flames of Purgatory; the churches continue to sell their purgatory-booklets, depicting on their covers naked souls burning in huge fires; the priests and monks continue to peddle their purgatorial 'fire insurance' at the rate of a million dollars a day; Catholic periodicals and newspapers continue to rake the purgatorial fires by saying: "Purgatory is real—a suburb of Hell . . . —the temperature is about the same in both regions" (*Our Sunday Visitor, Nov. 26, 1944*); and bishops continue to sell Catholic war mothers divine fire policies for 40 dollars per soldier: "What better guarantee for any boy exposed to all the hazard of war. A guarantee, should he be killed, that he will go at once to his Maker" (*Archbishop A. Sinnott of Winnipeg in pastoral letter of March 1, 1944*). Those unfamiliar with patrology, like Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, believe that the doctrine of Purgatory is of apostolic origin and was never questioned until the evil reformers rejected it in 1517: "the Christian world believed in it for sixteen centuries" (*Sheen, "Preface to Religion", N.Y., Kenedy, 1946, p. 137*).

We have already quoted the Catholic Encyclopedia for admitting that for 1300 years, beginning with St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Clement, St. Ambrose, down to Pope John XXII (1134), the Western Church believed in a Middle Place, a delightful abode, where souls without beatific vision awaited the resurrection (*C.E. 8, 551*). Hence, releases from Purgatory were unknown in the Catholic or Ecumenical Church (325-1054) and are still unknown in the Greek Orthodox Church of today.

Cardinal Newman, after whom all Catholic youth organizations in America are named, writes: "On the subject of Purgatory there were, to speak generally, two schools of opinion; the Greek, which contemplated a trial of fire at the Last Day through which all are to pass; and the African, resembling more nearly the present doctrine of the Roman



Church . . . Clement may hold a 'purgatory', yet tend to consider all punishment purgatorial . . . St. Hilary may believe in a purgatory, yet confine it to the Day of Judgment . . . Prayers for the faithful departed may be found in the early liturgies, yet with an indistinctness which include the Blessed Virgin and the Martyrs in the same rank with the imperfect Christians . . . Thus we see how, as time went on, the doctrine of Purgatory was brought home to the minds of the faithful as a portion or form of penance due to post-baptismal sin" (*Cardinal Newman, Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 21 & 390).

### LIMBO

The eternal destination of unbaptized children did not become a theological issue in the West until a "saintly" Irish hermit, Pelagius, at the beginning of the 5th century came to the city of Rome, teaching that "children, though unbaptized, have eternal life" (*Augustine, On Pelagius; Migne, P.L. 44, 334*). Rome first accepted the Pelagian teachings, but Africa condemned them. Through St. Augustine the Council of Carthage decreed: "If anyone should say that the saying of the Lord: 'In my Father's House are many mansions' is to be interpreted as meaning that in the kingdom of heaven there will be a (special) Middle Place, or some place somewhere, in which infants live in happiness who have left this life without baptism . . . let him be anathema" (*Council of Carthage, A.D. 418, canon 9; A.D. 419, canon 110; Mansi 4, 402*).

Pope Innocent and St. Jerome opposed Pelagius. When the Church of Jerusalem accepted the Pelagian view, Pope Zosimus (415) sided with Pelagius and Palestine until Africa forced the bishop of Rome to recant.

After the end of the Pelagian heresies (6th cent.) Rome gradually began to abolish her adult catechumenate, grad-

ually introduced infant baptism, and taught that all unbaptized babies burn for all eternity in the fires of Hell. The Catholic Encyclopedia informs us that St. Anselm (d. 1109), Bishop of Canterbury, still taught that "unbaptized children share in the positive sufferings of the damned" (*C.E. 9, 256*).

The first opposition to a Hell for babies came from the pen of Peter Abelard (d. 1142). He was at first opposed by the French hierarchy, but Peter Lombard (d. 1164?), Archbishop of Paris, adopted his view. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) divided the Bosom of Abraham into two regions: The Limbo of the Fathers and the Limbo of children. In his *Summa* St. Thomas raised the question: "Whether the Limbo of Children is the same as the Limbo of the Fathers?" He answered: "The Limbo of the Fathers and the Limbo of Children, without any doubt, differ as to the quality of punishment or reward; for children have no hope of the blessed life . . . The place of both is the same, except that the Limbo of the Fathers is placed higher than the Limbo of Children" (*Pseudo-Thomas, Summa, Supplement to Part III, Question 69, Art. 6*). Thomas speaks with authority, but without a shred of biblical evidence.

When during the 13th and 14th centuries the Thomistic "Limbo of Hell" became obsolete, and when the old Middle Place with its abode of pleasure came to be replaced by a Purgatory of fire, the old paradisaical Limbo of the just was bequeathed to unbaptized babies.

Though the doctrine of "Limbo" for unbaptized babies has not yet been defined as a dogma, and, therefore, could be rejected by Roman Catholics, yet the priests, nuns and their catechism books are expounding this doctrine as Gospel truth. Every Catholic, therefore, firmly believes that unbaptized babies are deprived of the beatific vision, but enjoy paradisaical happiness in a peaceful abode, known as "Limbo".



## INDULGENCES

## ARE INDULGENCES OF ROMAN CATHOLIC ORIGIN?

The Middle Ages knew three kinds of indulgences: (1) *Penitential* indulgences (11th to 16th cent.), which were papal pardons from priest-imposed penances; (2) *Penal* indulgences (14th cent.), which are papal pardons from temporal punishment due to sin, which the living can gain only for themselves; (3) *Purgatorial* indulgences (15th cent.), which are gained by the living for the dead. The first kind became extinct when Public Penance became extinct. The second and third kind are now called simply "indulgences", gained either for oneself or for the souls in purgatory.

When considering the occasion rather than the effect of granted indulgences, we may divide them into (1) *Crusade* indulgences (11th cent.) gained by soldiers; (2) *Holy Land* indulgences (13th cent.) gained by those who gave alms to finance the crusades; (3) *Monastery* or Church indulgences, like the Portiuncula indulgence (13th cent.), to finance a local institution; (4) *War* indulgences (13th cent.) to finance wars against heretics or schismatic kings; (5) *Jubilee* indulgences (14th cent.) to finance the papacy at Rome; (6) *modern* indulgences, like Scapulars, Medals, Rosaries, etc., promoted by various Orders for the alleged benefit of the souls in Purgatory.

The modern Church of Rome recognizes only two kind of

indulgences: Plenary and Partial. The first is a full, the latter a partial remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. The distinction between *culpa* (guilt) and *paena* (punishment) originated in the 11th century, and led to the medieval belief that the guilt of sin can be remitted while the temporal punishment remains. When a murderer receives absolution from a priest, he receives remission from the eternal punishment of Hell, but he still has to burn in the fires of Purgatory for his confessed sin.

Indulgences were never granted by the Catholic or Ecumenical Church (325-1054) and are not granted today by the Greek Orthodox Church. They are of Roman Catholic origin (1095 A.D.). Some theologians try to make the indulgence older by identifying it with the Redemptions (8th and 9th cent.). Even so the origin of the indulgence would be medieval and non-biblical. However, Redemptions are of totally different origin. The Anglo-Saxon Penitential system, adopted by Rome in the 9th century, gave the penitent a choice between physical punishment and a monetary fine. Both were imposed by a local penitentiary or confessor, and the penitent could take his choice. A plenary indulgence is a pardon by the pope of Rome, who knows neither the penitent nor the penitentiary. As no honest person can confuse a *fine* imposed by a local judge with the *pardon* granted by the governor of a State, the distinction between Redemptions and Indulgences is clear.

The word Indulgence (*indulgentia*) means "pardon". From the 11th to the 16th century it meant the pardon from the penance imposed by the local penitentiary. After the penance had been (1) fulfilled or pardoned, (2) the bishop pronounced absolution, (3) and the sins were finally forgiven. Because of this historical development, the modern ritual still prescribes the priest to grant the sinner: "*Indulgentiam, Absolutionem et Remissionem peccatorum* (pardon, absolu-



tion and remission of sins)."

An indulgence is a *spiritual* gift, such as the absolution and remission of sin, granted by the pope (or primate) in return for a *material* favor, such as military service or monetary funds. As in the case of Mass Stipends, the Roman Church was never as blunt as to state that for a fixed sum one could "buy" the remission of sin, but always used the euphemistic word "alms" (*eleemosyna*), even though the amount was fixed and was imposed on rich and poor alike. "Alms" became synonymous with "cash money". The barbarians of Northern Europe introduced this form of simony into the church. When St. Boniface (d. 755) converted the Germanic tribes, he told them: "As water extinguishes fire, so alms (money) extinguishes sin (*sicut aqua extinguit ignem, ita eleemosyna extinguit peccatum*)" (*Migne, P.L.* 89, 870). The granting of grace and spiritual favors "under the pretext of alms" (*Migne, P.L.* 77, 1030) had been exposed by all the Fathers and Saints of the Ecumenical Church, and continued to be under attack by the Saints of the Roman Catholic Church from the time of Peter Abelard (d. 1142) till the days of the Reformation, but without avail.

The Roman assertion that indulgences are not pardons or remissions of sin, and that Martin Luther partly from ignorance and partly from ill-will misinterpreted the Roman indulgences, is totally false. Though the post-Reformation Indulgence has undergone some change and can no longer be called an outright pardon or remission of sins, the medieval indulgence definitely was a pardon from both guilt and punishment. Medieval sins were believed to be unremitted until the penitent had received the absolution of the church. The absolution was not given until the penance had been fulfilled. If a penitent died without absolution, he was considered lost. The papal indulgences were granted to sinners who had confessed and were numbered among

the penitents. As the penitents were not to receive their absolution and remission for many years to come, the medieval indulgence was nothing else than an immediate pardon, absolution and remission granted by the pope himself. Thus for a sum of money the sinner was granted the remission of his sins. Neither is it correct to speak here of "abuses", as Roman authors are wont to do, for there are no other indulgences except those you pay for one way or another. When the origin of the indulgence itself is non-biblical, illegal and fraudulent, one cannot speak of abuses.

Some authors, like those of the Catholic Encyclopedia, falsely claim that Pope John XIX (1030) "seems to have been the first pope to grant an indulgence in return for alms bestowed" (*C.E.* 8, 429). We have seen, however, that these same authors admit that "during a great part of the Middle Ages papal and other documents were fabricated in a very unscrupulous fashion" (*C.E.* 3, 57). Before the final schism (1054), when papal taxes and papal indulgences were still unknown, Rome did not have a "Camera" or Chamber of Finances. After Hildebrand (1073) instituted this office, financial records were not always kept. When later popes began to sell indulgences to monasteries in a Mafia style, charging huge sums for papal protection against plunder, many Abbots and Bishops fabricated documents in order to obtain privileges without payment. Since the Reformation, Rome has been very busy with destroying all evidence of authentic sales of indulgences. This being the case, we must examine the writings of impartial historians and theologians in order to establish the date of origin of the various indulgences of the Western Church. Even if Pope John XIX in 1030 had originated the sale of indulgences, it still would be of Western origin, and it still would have been unheard of during the first ten centuries of Christianity.

The first mention of an Indulgence is that of the Crusade



indulgence by the Council of Clermont (1095). We not only possess the records of this council, but there are several contemporary historians who have described for us the details of the First Crusade. The "Venerable" Guilbert (1053-1124), Abbot of St. Mary of Nogente, who was born in the town of Clermont, described in his "*Gesta Dei per Francos*" both the Council and the Crusade. One of the first ones to use the word "papacy" in the meaning of episcopate, he informs us that "Pope Urban, before his episcopate, was named Odo (Urbanus papa, ante papatum Odo vocabatur)" (*Migne, P.L. 156, 695*). He describes how "The pope came to France and convoked the Council of Clermont" (p. 698); how Peter the Hermit preached the crusade (p. 704); the slogan of the crusade: *Deus id vult, Dieux le volt*, "God will it" (p. 752); etc. Now this official recorder of the *Acta* of the pope and the *Gesta* of God, informs us that God caused in our days the holy battles of the Crusade in order to give us "a new way of salvation (*novum salutis genus*)" (*Migne, P.L. 156, 685*). Hence, it has been historically established that the granting of indulgences originated in 1095.

Indulgences were not instituted by Christ to introduce a new way of salvation, but were occasioned by the Turks. To offset the fanatical courage of the Mohammedans, who were guaranteed immediate glory if they died in a holy war, Pope Urban II decreed: "Whosoever . . . shall go to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God, this journey shall be counted in lieu of all penance (*iter illud pro omni poenitentia reputetur*)" (*Council of Clermont, A.D. 1095, canon 2; Mansi 20, 816*). These crusades were far from being holy wars, but encouraged young men to spoil, steal, rape and murder while away from home and family.

The more discouraging the crusades became, the greater favors the popes had to promise in order to find new dupes

to enlist. Pope Nicholas IV in 1291 not only promised full pardon to the crusaders, but also included their parents. At first one could gain a plenary indulgence (full pardon) only by actually participating in a crusade. Later the pardon was granted at the moment one took the vow to join the crusade. Still later one could be released from the vow by paying the price of a soldier who as a *replacer* would fight in one's stead. Finally, one could obtain full pardon by paying a flat sum without taking a vow or assuming the banner of the cross.

Migne and Mansi have printed few texts of papal Bulls granting indulgences, except those mentioned and described by medieval historians. Migne's collection of Western authors ends with Pope Innocent III (d. 1216), when the indulgence market was still young. Migne has printed a few Monastery indulgences of the 11th and 12th century, which seem spurious. It is generally believed that the first indulgence of that kind was the Portiuncula indulgence, falsely attributed to St. Francis (1223). We will examine a few papal Bulls in chronological order.

The French monks of the St. Nicholas Monastery near Angers want us to believe that Pope Urban II (1096), one year after the First Crusade indulgence, granted to their parish a large indulgence (one-seventh of the crusade indulgence) for just attending their anniversary feast: "Bishop Urban, servant of the servants of God, to the beloved son, Natalus, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Nicholas which is situated near Angers . . . Through the merits of Blessed Michael We remit the seventh part of the sentence received for sins (*judicii pro peccatis accepti partem septimam illis remittimus*) to those who on this day of dedication have cared to gather here with devout mind . . . We give protection to the Monastery of St. Nicholas . . . We have decreed that it is not permitted to anyone ever to disturb



this Convent (coenobium) or to take away its possessions . . . Given in the year of the Lord, 1096, the 8th year of the pontificate of Lord Pope Urban II" (*Migne, P.L. 151, 447-449*).

Pope Callistus II is said to have granted in 1121 not only a fantastic Cemetery Indulgence, but also a Church Dedication Indulgence of "one year of remission of criminal sins and one third of the venial sins, confessed" (*Migne, P.L. 163, 1227*). He attributed his power of granting indulgences to the authority of God, of Mary and of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

During the days of St. Bernard, according to the French nuns of Montmartre, Pope Eugene III (1147) granted them a similar indulgence. Known as the "Bull of Dedication of the Church of Montmartre", this indulgence attributes the papal power to the more customary merits of Peter and Paul rather than to those of Michael or Mary. The pope is said to have decreed that to all who should visit the Church of Montmartre on the anniversary of its dedication, and "who should bestow their alms on these nuns" (*Sanctimonialibus suas eleemosynas largiti fuerint*), "We grant 700 days of enjoined penance (*septingentos dies injunctae penitentiae . . . indulgemus*)", "and this indulgence we have confirmed by the page of our writing" (*Migne, P.L. 180, 1242*). In spite of the confirmation, the document may be spurious. According to the Penitentials a penance of one year of fasting on bread and water could be redeemed by paying 25 or 26 gold pieces (*Migne, P.L. 132, 256; 140, 1009*). If one of the lower clergy committed theft he was given one year of penance; an act of fornication was punished by a three year penance; murder by a penance of ten years (*Migne, P.L. 80, 225; 105, 698*). The Montmartre indulgence, therefore, equalled a redemption of 50 *solidi*, or more than half of a penance for fornication. Whether this Bull is authentic or

not, it is a historical fact that penitents who lived in Paris or who made a pilgrimage to Paris were told that they could gain pardon, absolution and remission of their sins by donating funds to the Monastery of Montmartre. Those authors who claim that these papal indulgences are genuine, but deny that monasteries paid Rome for obtaining these privileges, have never been able to explain why Rome did not grant all monasteries and all churches the same graces of salvation.

In 1188, after Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the Moslems, Pope Clement III announced the indulgence for the Third Crusade in his Bull "Ad audientiam Romanae Ecclesiae", saying: "The Lord Pope . . . has ordained . . . that from the day on which anyone should take the cross, he will have relaxation of the whole penance enjoined on him for his sins for which he shall be penitent and confessed, and likewise from forgotten sins (*Dominus papa . . . ordinavit . . . quod a die qua quislibet crucem acceperit, totius poenae sibi injunctae habebit de peccatis suis de quibus poenitens et confessus, et similiter de oblitis, relaxationem*)" (*English Historical Society of London, Publications, vol. 16, part 1, p. 274; William of Newburgh, Historia Rerum Anglicarum, vol. 1, p. 274*). Those who could not take the cross were asked to give a tenth of their total annual income.

On January 6th, 1199, Pope Innocent III published the Bull "Graves Orientalis terrae miserias" (*p. 108*) to collect funds for the Holy Land. He granted to the bishops, clergy and laity the following indulgences: "To all clergymen, subordinates as well as prelates, who pay their *fortieth* willingly and faithfully (*qui quadragesimam ipsam sponte et fideliter solverint*), We, by the mercy of Almighty God and relying on the authority of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, relax the fourth part of the penance imposed on



them (quartam partem injunctae sibi poenitentiae relaxamus)" (p. 109). The laity were instructed "to deposit their money for the remission of their sins (suas eleemosynas deponere in remissionem suorum peccaminum)" (p. 110). The Pope informed the bishops that "you can commute the burden of enjoined penance into the burden of giving alms (opus injunctae poenitentiae commutare possitis in opus eleemosynae faciendae)" (p. 111). This Bull is said to have been signed at Rome on Jan. 6, 1199 (*Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*; vol. 51, part 4, pp. 108-112; *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*; ed. by William Stubbs, vol. 4, pp. 108-112).

On Dec. 27, 1199, Pope Innocent III granted the crusaders "the full pardon of their sins" and "the reward of eternal salvation", while he granted the same indulgence to those who could not go in person, but who were willing to send a suitable man to take their place at their expense.

In 1212, Pope Innocent III made the Holy Land Indulgence a permanent feature by placing chests in all churches and by granting partial indulgences to the laity who deposited the money for the Holy Land into the chest.

In 1215, Pope Innocent III became the first pope to grant indulgences in crusades against Western heretics and schismatics, like the Albigenses: "Catholics who have assumed the banner of the cross and have armed themselves for the extermination of heretics (haereticorum exterminium) will enjoy the same indulgence (illa gaudeant indulgentia) and will be protected by the same holy privilege as is granted to those who came to the aid of the Holy Land" (*Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, canon 3*; *Mansi 22, 987*). This is the beginning of the Inquisition headed by St. Dominic. A murderer, for example, could obtain full pardon and immediate absolution and remission of his sin, by murdering people of other religions or denominations. This is the new

way of salvation: salvation by murder.

In November of the same year (1215) Pope Innocent III organized "the expedition to liberate the Holy Land" and published the Bull, "Ad liberandum terram sanctam", with the following indulgence for the crusaders: "We grant full pardon of their sins for which they are truly contrite in heart and orally confessed (plenam suorum peccaminum, de quibus veraciter fuerint corde contriti et ore confessi, veniam indulgemus)" (*Mansi 22, 1067*; *Hardouin 7, 17*). All clergymen, subordinates as well as prelates, were ordered to donate their twentieth part (vigesimal partem) (*Mansi 22, 1062*).

The Portiuncula indulgence (August 2nd), which might have originated in the 14th century, is attributed to Pope Honorius III (in 1223). St. Francis in 1223 founded a new order, bought a little church which he remodelled and dedicated on August 2nd to St. Mary of Portiuncula. This new name seems to refer to some miraculous statue of Mary, but tradition tells us that St. Francis used a new indulgence to publicize and finance his new order. If it originated with St. Francis, then the Portiuncula is the first plenary indulgence granted to a monastery in peace time, capable of being gained by women and men alike not engaged in bloody wars of conquest.

According to *pious traditions* God Himself appeared in person to the young St. Francis and advised him to see the pope about attaching an indulgence to his monastery. According to still *more pious traditions* the Devil in person appeared to St. Francis complaining that this new indulgence was ruining his business by depopulating all Hell. In any case the new indulgence granted to all those who visited the shrine of Our Lady of Portiuncula (Italy) on its feast of dedication (Aug. 2) the full pardon of all their sins. As the easy Portiuncula indulgence equalled the Crusade

indulgence, it drew millions of pilgrims to the collection plates of the Franciscan shrine.

Today, Roman Catholics no longer have to travel to Italy, but have been granted the privilege to "portiuuncle" in their own parish church. As this indulgence can be gained as often as one visits his church on Portiuncula Day, and as the indulgence can now be applied to the poor souls in Purgatory, Roman Catholics think it smart to cut their make-believe pilgrimages short by sticking their noses outside the church door and walking right back in again to pick up another indulgence. Whenever you see them walking in and out the church, they are "portiuunculing". Salvation is not by bargains, nor by climbing church steps, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Pope Boniface VIII in 1300 invented the Holy Year Indulgence. "The ultimate derivation of the word 'jubilee' is disputed . . . It is commonly stated that Pope Boniface VIII instituted the first Christian Jubilee in the year 1300, and it is certain that this is the first celebration of which we have any precise record" (C.E. 8, 531-532).

Pope Boniface, both at the trial of Paris convoked by King Philip (June, 1303) and at the council convoked by Pope Clement V (Nov., 1310), was condemned for being an atheist, murderer and sex pervert. He did not believe in life after death, he denied the divinity of Christ, he held that the three great religions (Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan) were human inventions, he had murdered several priests and his predecessor Pope Celestine, he committed fornication and constantly told his friends: "delectare et jacere carnaliter cum mulieribus vel cum pueris non est majus peccatum quam fricare manus suas insimul; to enjoy oneself and to lie carnally with women and with boys is no more a sin than rubbing one's hands together" (Pierre Dupuy, d. 1651, ed. *Preuves de l'Histoire du differend de Boniface et*

*Philippe le Bel; Paris, 1655, p. 541).*

This evil man, who privately was an unbeliever, took diabolical pleasure in publicly overstating the powers of the papacy. In his Bull "Unam Sanctam" (1302) he states: "We declare, state, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (*Mirbt No. 372; Kidd No. 135; Denzinger No. 466*). He must have laughed aloud when he drew up his Bull of Jubilee, and promised the peasants "great remissions and pardons of sins (magnae remissiones et indulgentiae peccatorum)", "not only full and bigger, nay, We grant the fullest pardon of all your sins, and We forgive the guilt of sins (non solum plenam et largiorem, imo plenissimam omnium suorum concedemus et concedimus veniam peccatorum)" (*Boniface VIII, Bull "Antiquorum", Feb. 22, 1300; Bullarium Romanum, vol. 3, part 2, p. 94; also in: Mirbt No. 370; Kidd No. 134; Denzinger No. 476*).

Roman theologians falsely claim that papal indulgences only promised in full or in part the pardon from the temporal punishment due to sin (paena), but never granted the remission of the sins themselves (remissio peccatorum). Pope Boniface VIII promised the full pardon of both guilt (culpa) and punishment (paena). The contemporary Italian historian, Giovanni Villani (d. 1348), who was at the Roman festivities in person (*Villani, Historie, bk 8, chapt. 36*) reports in Italian: "The pope . . . granted big indulgences (grande indulgentia) . . . he granted very big and great indulgences (somma et grande indulgentia) . . . there should be granted full and entire pardon of all their sins (piena et intera perdonanza di tutti i suoi peccati), of both guilt and punishment (di colpa et di pena)" (*Muratori, R.I.S., vol. 13, p. 367*). This is a contemporary Italian translation of the Latin "Bulls of remission", as accurate as any newspaper reporting of today.



Any Italian who visited for 30 days, or any foreigner who visited for 15 days the Church of St. Peter and Paul, and made his contribution of alms, received his "bull of full pardon". As many as 200,000 peasants arrived at Rome in a single day. The ushers of the St. Peter used rakes and shovels to gather the coins. Salvation by money. A new indulgence invented and granted by a convicted atheist. Jubilee or Holy Year indulgences were originally intended to be held once in every hundred years. They proved so profitable financially that the lapse of time was immediately reduced to every 50 years, then 40, then 33, and finally to every 25 years.

Pope Clement V in 1308 granted a partial Holy Land indulgence of one year to those who contributed alms for the crusades: "We . . . mercifully relax everyone . . . truly penitent and confessed . . . of one year of penance imposed on you".

As soon as Pope Clement VI was elected (1342) he announced a new Jubilee indulgence, a pardon from the guilt and punishment of sin ("perdonato colpa e pena") (*Muratori, R.I.S., vol. 13, p. 884*). The 1350 Jubilee indulgence, announced by Villani (d. 1348; *Historie bk 12, chapt. 10*), became so scandalous that it nearly resulted in an open revolt. St. Catherine of Siena (d. 1380) condemned the Roman hierarchy as "Demons of Hell" (*Demoni infernali*) and "Venders of divine grace" (*Rivenditori della divina grazia*) (*Caterina, "Epistole", Ep. 41; vol. 1, p. 253*). John Wycliff (d. 1384) in England warned that "it is foolish to believe in the indulgences of the Pope" (*Council of Constance, Session 8; Mansi 27, 633-634*). When St. Bridget of Sweden (d. 1373) went to Rome to buy her bull of remission, she personally witnessed the sales of bulls, and had a vision wherein she was instructed to inform the pope: "You are more cruel than Judas . . . You sell not only Me (God),

but also the souls of My elect, for the sake of your filthy lucre and vain glory . . . Your unsatisfiable lust and luxury are detestable to Me, and constitute the worst hell of horrible simony" (*The Revelations of St. Bridget*). The Anglo-Saxon poet, Audelay (a blind monk of the 15th cent.), dedicated a poem to "Blessid Bregid" wherein he ridicules her ignorance: "If this pope, because of his greed, will grant thee no grace without money, surely the Father of Heaven will confirm thy bull of remission."

Pope Benedict XII (1334) in his Constitution "Benedictus Deus" had made the immediate glorification of the just a new article of faith (*Denzinger No. 530*), and Pope Clement VI (1342) not only had given the Holy Land Indulgences to the Franciscan Order, but he had dogmatized the Treasury of the Church when he defined the doctrines "De Satisfactione, Thesauri Ecclesiae, et Indulgentiis" (*Bull "Unigenitus Dei Filius", Jan. 25, 1343; Denzinger No. 550*). Consequently, the Jubilee Indulgence of 1350 could refer to both man-made penances and to the divine punishment due to sin, but still it could not be gained for the souls of Purgatory.

Under "Scapulars" we mentioned that the Carmelite indulgences of 1251 and 1322 were spurious, but that Pope Urban VI in 1379 had granted to the Carmelites an authentic indulgence of three years and three quarantines (*Hist. of Dogma, vol. 2, p. 140*). A quarantine was a medieval penance of the length of Lent, that is, forty days. For all these privileges the Orders remunerated the papacy. An example of a Jubilee Indulgence turned into a Monastery Indulgence is the plenary indulgence granted by Pope Boniface IX on Aug. 4, 1395 to the Diocese of Constance. To allow the people to gain full pardon at home instead of at Rome, the bishop had to promise to split the collected alms with the pope on a fifty percent basis. The Bull stated: "Any person



of the city and diocese of Constance . . . who is truly penitent and confessed, and who shall have visited the church of the monastery on seven days . . . shall obtain this fullest indulgence".

It is a mistake to think of medieval pilgrimages as acts of piety. In the first place they were not fit for women, while men stayed away from home for months and years to visit Rome and Jerusalem. Even before the time of Roman Catholicism and its system of indulgences, Bishop Boniface warned Bishop Cudbert of Canterbury (744) to keep his British ladies and nuns from the Continent of Europe: "There are few cities in Lombardy, in France, or in Gaul in which there is not an adulteress or prostitute from England, which is a scandal and disgrace to the whole church" (*Muratori, Antiquitates*, vol. 5, p. 59). The First Crusade consisted of gangsters, bandits and other medieval outlaws who loved to fight. Pope Urban II in 1095 shouted to them: "soldiers of Hell, become soldiers of the living God . . . the wealth of our enemies shall be yours, because you may plunder their possessions." The Jubilee Year pilgrimages to Rome (on foot) were not only expensive, but dangerous, because the highways were lined with beggars, robbers and prostitutes right up to the altar of the St. Peter. When people showed resentment to the Holy Year of 1400, Pope Boniface IX granted full pardon from sin to anyone who was willing to give him the price of a journey to Rome.

Pope John XXIII in 1410 began to sell indulgences to anyone for any occasion. "Pope John sold for cash money: indulgences for the dying, the preaching of the Cross, and also absolution from punishment and guilt (a poena et a culpa)" (*Council of Constance, 1415, Session 10, Art. 29; Mansi 27, 666*).

The Council of Basle (1437) continued to speak of papal bulls of pardons which grant remission of all sins ("Bullae

indulgentiarum remissionis omnium peccatorum"; *Mansi 29, 128*). The Council of Florence (1439) established the existence of Purgatory as a doctrine of the Western Church. St. Antoninus (d. 1459), a Dominican monk who was Archbishop of Florence, obediently accepted the new doctrine of Purgatory, but still was lukewarm toward papal indulgences. In his *Summa* he states: "There is no explicit mention of indulgences either in the Sacred Scriptures . . . or in the works of the ancient Fathers, but only in recent writings" (*Antoninus, Summa Theologica, Part I, Title 10, chapt. 3; Verona, 1740, vol. 1, p. 597*). Because Purgatory was such a recent doctrine while the doctrine of papal indulgences had not yet been defined, the Bishop of Avila (1443), as we mentioned under Purgatory, refused to believe in these novelties until the Inquisition forced him to confess that "the pope can also absolve from all sins and can give a plenary indulgence."

In 1450 Pope Nicholas V announced a Holy Year of Jubilee, granting full remission to those who came to Rome. Queen Margaret, though she had all the time and money on earth to buy a bull of remission at Rome, was not permitted by King Henry VI of England to make the pilgrimage. To avoid a 'scandal', the pope on Oct. 5, 1450, granted the queen's confessor the delegated power of bestowing the Jubilee indulgence on her. While this pope was selling his Jubilee indulgences, he continued the sale of monastery privileges. He granted, for example, a "Bulla de Indulgentia" to the St. Martin's Church of London on June 11, 1450 (*Thomas Rymer, Foedera; 20 vol. ed. of 1735, vol. 11, p. 270*).

In 1476 Pope Sixtus IV, an immoral Franciscan monk (*Alzog II, 905*), decreed that he could bestow pardons on the souls in Purgatory, that is, a commutation of the divine sentence of the Particular Judgment of the dead by a living pope. The doctrine of the application of the treasury of



indulgences to the souls in Purgatory was defined in the Bull "Salvator noster", Aug. 3, 1476 (*Denzinger No. 3082*). On this very same day the pope granted an "Indulgence for the Dead" to all those who "give a certain sum of money for the repair of the Church of Xancto" (*Denzinger No. 723a*). This is the beginning of Purgatorial Indulgences, originating seven years before the birth of Martin Luther (1483-1546).

In 1500, when Martin Luther was 17, Pope Alexander VI proclaimed a Holy Year of Jubilee, described by his official recorder of Papal Acts, Bishop John Burchard (d. 1506), in his "Diary" (*Diarium, Paris, 1885, 3 vols.*). As mentioned under "Clerical Celibacy" (vol. 1, p. 133), full remissions were granted, for example, to a Benedictine monk who contracted marriage, a Franciscan monk who had left the woman he married, a priest who made his niece pregnant, etc. Pope Alexander VI (d. 1503) lived with a twice divorced woman, Countess Vanozza de Catanei, and with Julia Farnese. His illegitimate children, like Juan, Caesar, Joffre and Lucretia, and even his son "John Borgia" are world renowned. Under Oct. 31, 1501 the Diary relates that the pope invited fifty ladies for dinner at the Apostolic Palace. After dinner he persuaded them to dance and to play games in the total nude. He then held an intercourse contest wherein he personally awarded the prize to the male guest who managed to have the greatest number of sexual intercourse with the ladies ("pluries dictas meretrices carnaliter agnoscerent"). These mass acts of fornication and adultery were publicly exhibited to the viewers ("in aula publice carnaliter tractatae" (*Bishop John Burchard, "Diarium", Paris, 1885; vol. 3, p. 167*). Never suspecting that the Church was approaching the Day of the Reformation and that papal records might one day be translated into the language of the people, this famous bishop, liturgist and papal biographer recorded the life of Pope Alexander VI

as faithfully as he composed the Roman Missal which is still in use today.

The Jubilee Indulgence of 1500 A.D. has been recorded by many historians. Polydore Vergil (d. 1555), Chamberlain of Pope Alexander VI, who was commissioned by King Henry VII (1505) to write a history of England, informs us that in 1500 A.D. a Jubilee was celebrated at Rome. All those who visited the city of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, were granted "the full remission of all their sins (plena delictorum omnium remissio)" (*London, Royal Historical Society; Camden Third Series, vol. 74, p. 118; Polydore Vergil, Anglica Historia, London, 1950, p. 118*).

The British peasants were unable to visit Rome, because they could not cross the sea. The British merchants and government officials resented the long journeys to Rome for obtaining the grace of salvation ("come and get it"). The British hierarchy objected to the fact that all alms went directly to Rome, leaving their own churches without income. It gradually became a custom to grant distant lands the same Jubilee indulgences the year after the Holy Year had closed at Rome. This was not a charitable act on the part of the pope, but a calculated method of getting the "alms" of the peasants who stayed home.

The Bull of Indulgence, granted to the natives of England in 1501 A.D., was called "The Bull of the Holy Jubilee of full remission and great joy granted to the Realm of England, Wales and Ireland". This Bull informed the British that the Holy Year of Grace, the year of the remission of all sins, is now passed. But, because of the love of the Most Holy Father for the British people, this "great indulgence and remission of sins and trespasses" has been extended for a year, to be gained on British soil. While the British Bull speaks of the loving kindness of the Pope, Rome sent its trained legates and tax collectors throughout the British



Isles to collect the last penny. "Tax what every man shall put into the chest that will receive this great grace of their jubilee . . . having lands, tenements, or rents, amounting to a yearly value of 2,000 li. or above, must pay . . . if they will receive this great indulgence and grace of this jubilee . . . three pounds, six shillings and eight pence . . . (etc.)" (*Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, vol. 24, part 2, p. 97; James Gairdner, *Letters and papers illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, London, 1863, vol. 2, p. 97). When this Bull was written, Martin Luther was 18 years old.

Pope Leo X, as we mentioned in our first volume (p. 133), was ordained at the age of seven, created a cardinal at the age of thirteen, and in spite of his immoral life he was elected pope in 1513. The papacy, by means of the Peter's Pence, papal taxes and papal indulgences, had been draining the wealth of Germany, England and other Western countries for so long that both bishops and secular rulers had to do something to survive. Even Cardinal Ximenes in 1513 forbade the traffic in indulgences in Spain.

At the very beginning of his reign Pope Leo sold the German archbishoprics of Magdeburg, Halberstadt and Mainz for \$175,000 to Albert of Brandenburg, a young noble of 23 who was a layman. The new pope allowed the new Primate of Germany to pay him his debts by granting him the permission to preach throughout Germany a papal indulgence on the customary 50 percent basis, that is, splitting the profits. These historical facts are admitted by all Catholic scholars. Among the legates, venders, quaestors and preachers employed to promote the sale of this indulgence was the Dominican monk, John Tetzel (d. 1519). They assessed the rich according to their income as high as \$350 per person. Resisting the hierarchy was still punishable by burning at the stake. The peasants were told that the very

minute they deposited their money in the chest their favorite soul would leave the fires of Purgatory. It is so ridiculous for unknown authors to speak of excusable rhetorical exaggerations by Tetzel, when Catholic scholars have admitted that his statements were presented as constituting the official views of that era. The Catholic historian, Rev. Pastor, explains: "There is no doubt that Tetzel did . . . proclaim as Christian doctrine that nothing but an offering of money was required to gain the Indulgence for the dead . . . He also taught, in accordance with an opinion then held, that an Indulgence could be applied to any given soul with unfailing effect" (*Pastor, Hist. of the Popes*, vol. 7, p. 349).

The papal bulls of full remission were official documents signed and sealed by the pope and sold in exchange for a fixed sum of money. At the time of Martin Luther, absolution of the priest was given to confessed sinners before their penance. When Prof. Dr. Martin Luther refused Communion to some incontinent sinners, they showed him their letters of indulgence. This prompted Luther to discuss the matter of indulgences publicly at the University of Wittenberg.

On October 31, 1517, the eve before the Holy Days of All Saints and All Souls, Dr. Luther, professor of theology, nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the chapel door of the university to encourage all professors and students to discuss the doctrine of papal indulgences. Luther was not hired by anyone but acted for God's cause. The old promise of "a general reformation of the Church of God, in its Head and members" (*ad generalem reformationem Ecclesiae Dei in capite et in membris*; Council of Basle, 1432; Mansi 29, 21), was now going to be realized. Thanks to the printing press, within a month all of Europe was whispering about Luther's Theses, hoping that this would end the papal tyranny. The result is well-known history, and need not be



repeated here.

Luther discussed such theses as: "They are preaching man-made doctrines who say that as soon as the coin jingles in the money-box, the soul flies out of Purgatory" (*Thesis* 27). He argued that if the Pope had the power to release souls from purgatorial fires, he would be compelled by conscience and love to release them first, and not hold out for ransom (*Thesis* 82). "Why are requiem and anniversary Masses for the dead continued, and why does he not refund or permit the withdrawal of endowments founded on their behalf, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?" (*Thesis* 83). "The Penitential Canons have long been abolished and are dead in effect and by disuse. Why then are relaxations from them still granted by paid indulgences, as though they were still alive and in force?" (*Thesis* 85).

This last question Rome has never attempted to answer. There is not a priest on earth who can inform you what is meant by a modern indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines. Professor Prümmer, like other modern theologians, vaguely claims that "authors teach most commonly that a partial indulgence, e.g. of seven years and seven quarantines, remits the same amount of punishment as was remitted by a penance of seven years and seven quarantines enjoined according to the old discipline of the Church" (*Prümmer, Vademecum*, p. 438). As soon as a Protestant theologian uses this "most commonly" held opinion as his premise, Catholic theologians (Thurston, Conway, etc.) immediately will ridicule his naiveness by proudly asserting that the Church has never defined anything of the sort.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), convoked by Pope Paul III, who was the brother of the papal prostitute, Julia Orsini (Farnese), and who had four known illegitimate children, infallibly ruled that indulgences had been instituted by Christ Himself, that they had been granted throughout the

centuries from the time of the apostles, and therefore they are "to be retained in the Church". Those who maintain that indulgences are useless or who deny that the pope has the power to grant them, let them be accursed (*Council of Trent, Session 25, Dec. 4, 1563; Mansi* 33, 194). Without a shred of evidence from the Fathers or Ecumenical Councils, the antiquity, the tradition and the legality of indulgences have thus been 'infallibly' established by a Roman Council of the sixteenth century.

The first indulgences were relaxations from the Penitential Canons which originated not in Jerusalem, nor in Rome, nor in Constantinople, but in the medieval, monk-infested Isles of Great Britain. The Papacy and its system of Indulgences originated in the 11th century. The distinction between *culpa* and *paena* was first advanced by Pseudo-Hugo (c. 1200) and its application differed from that of today. Oral confessions were made obligatory in 1215. Particular Judgment and the doctrine of superabundant merits of the saints originated in the 14th century. Purgatory itself and the application of indulgences to its inhabitants originated in the 15th century. Consequently, the granting of papal indulgences for the release of souls in Purgatory was unknown to the Ecumenical Church of the first thousand years of Christianity.

The greatest of all Fathers, St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, taught that God "destroys sin in such a manner that not the slightest trace of them is left" (*Migne, P.G.* 49, 339). This is still the teaching of the Protestant churches of today.

Modern indulgences may be less offensive than those of pre-Reformation times, but they still are pardons obtained by the means of money. Pope Pius XII proclaimed 1950 a Holy Year, and purposely revoked all existing plenary indulgences in order to force those who have ample time and



money to visit the collection boxes of Rome. Thousands of Catholics who died during the Holy Year and were too poor to travel to Rome, supposedly died without this plenary indulgence.

During the first half of the twentieth century the bookstores of Catholic Spain still exhibited ready-made Bulls of pardon. The "Bula de difuntos" sold for 75 centesimos and guaranteed any buyer a plenary indulgence for a dead friend. The Thief's Bull (bula de composicion) sold for the same price and allowed the thief to keep the stolen property up to \$3.00. For each additional \$3.00 worth of stolen goods the thief had to buy an extra bull. Thus the rightful owner received nothing, but the Primate of Spain collected 12½ percent of all stolen property, of which half goes to the Vatican. The "Bula de carnes", permanently on sale, allowed the bearer to eat meat on one Friday. Pope John XXIII continues to approve the sale of these Crusade indulgences (*Bula de Cruzada: Sumario General para 1960 . . . Clase 3a: limosna: 25 pesetas. Cardenal Pla Y Deniel, Toledo, 25 de Julio, 1959*).

The Catholic Encyclopedia explains: "Who can grant indulgences.—The distribution of the merits contained in the Treasury of the Church is an exercise of authority . . . Hence the pope, as supreme head of the church on earth, can grant all kinds of indulgences to any and all of the faithful; and HE ALONE can grant plenary indulgences . . . An essential element in indulgence is the application to one person of the satisfaction performed by others" (*C.E.* 7, 784). The Bible teaches just the opposite: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him (*Ps. 49:7*). Thus we see that the Biblical way of salvation is in direct opposition to the Roman way of salvation.



GAYLORD			PRINTED IN U.S.A.

**GAYLORD**

PRINTED IN U S A

3 1796 10140 8231

BX  
1765.2 Doeswyck  
D63 The Roman way  
of salvation.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ISSUED TO

BX  
1765.2  
D63